NEWS / A2

US House of Representatives, Senate hold separate hearings on RP human rights violations March 14

WORLD / A19

FBI admits breaking privacy laws to help investigate suspected terrorists

SUNDAY MAGAZINE

AGELESS: The mystique of older women; How Armida Siguion-Reyna finally found her groove and decided to look her age. Plus, Ballroom Dancing 101.

METRO / A17

He builds castles in the air complete with the highest turret down to the drawbridge, and not to forget a dragon to protect the kingdom.

INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Sunday, March 11, 2007 ★★ 11 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 93 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

INDEPENDENT

Candidates for Senate in alphabetical order

Richard "Goma" Gomez
Born April 7, 1966, Manila; married. **Education:** UP, Business entrepreneurship (short course); NYU Film School of Continuing Education. **Occupation:** Businessman, Actor. **Advocacy:** Anti-illegal drugs

Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan
Born March 14, 1948, Bagulo City; married. **Education:** AIM, MBA; PMA, 1971. **Occupation:** Senator, 1998-2001. **Advocacy:** AFP/PNP reforms, good gov't

Philippine Green Republican Party

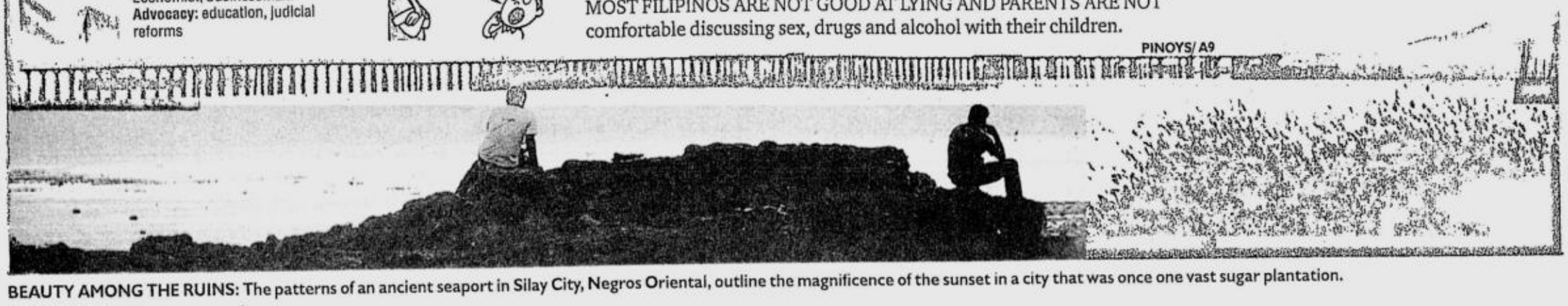
Felix "Peck" Cantal
Born May 18, 1949, Ormoc City. **Education:** Oxford University, PhD Political Economics; MLQU, Law. **Occupation:** Economist, businessman. **Advocacy:** education, judicial reforms

Pinoys bad at lying, can't talk sex to kids, says UP study

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

MOST FILIPINOS ARE NOT GOOD AT LYING AND PARENTS ARE NOT comfortable discussing sex, drugs and alcohol with their children.

PINOYS/ A9



BEAUTY AMONG THE RUINS: The patterns of an ancient seaport in Silay City, Negros Oriental, outline the magnificence of the sunset in a city that was once one vast sugar plantation.

Police raid Satur home

Also searched neighbors but didn't find solon

By Alcuin Papa

THE POLICE CAME CALLING, brandishing assault rifles, jumping over the gate, and then looking under beds, even peeking into the ceiling.

But they found no trace of Bayan Mur Rep. Satur Ocampo, a militant lawmaker cused of murders that occurred 22 years while he was being held in a maximum s rity jai'

In a surprise raid yesterday mornin some 20 policemen armed only ..ith a pho tocopy of an arrest warrant, also rched the houses of Ocampo's neighbor Gen. De Jesus Street in Heroes Hill, Quezon City

"They forced their way in without y pe mission. They climbed our gate, looked in side the closets and under the bec "They even knocked on the ceiling and s..che our storeroom," wife Carol "Bobbi Malay told the I

"The only place they didn't look was unde my skirt," she separately told The Associatec Press by telephone.

Malay said the raiders climbed the ami ly's 8-foot high gate to get in.

"Maybe they lik acti and anc

POLICE/ A8

One stroke, everything changes, beauty emerges

By Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

WITH ONE STROKE. AS WITH former president of the UniverSIty of the Philippines and one-time National Security Adviser Emanuel "Noel" Soriano, or with anyone, everything could change with one stroke, a brain stroke.

Discovering meaning and purpose in the aftermath of the disabling blow is consolation enough. But translating these into beauty is indeed a graced response to God's hello. And it takes a village, a community of caring persons, to make this happen.

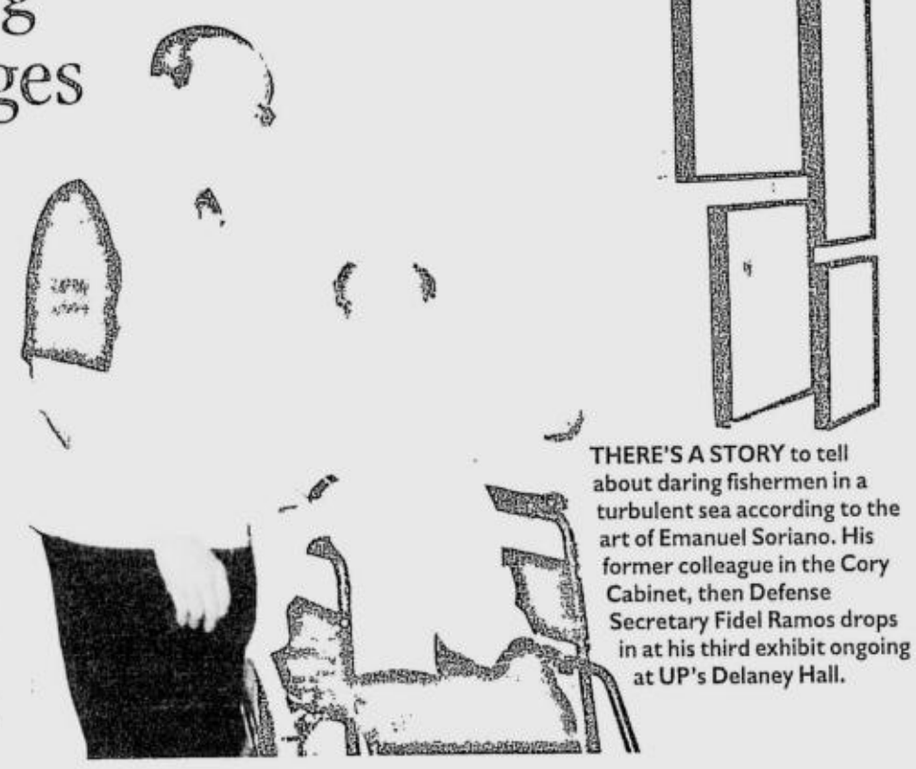
"It took a whole nation," Noel's wife Angge said, expressing her gratitude.

In July 1996, Noel suffered a stroke that rendered him paralyzed and unable to speak. After three months in the hospital, he was brought home. His wife Angge, a jovial, brave and take-charge type, and their four sons and two daughters were all there for him. But it would take several years before they could get an idea how far their hopes could take them.

Last week, Noel, who just turned 70, held his third exhibit, "A Fisherman's Story," of watercolor paintings at the UP's Delaney Hall. This was something not quite planned, Angge told the enthused crowd, but Noel's persistence (through one-word grunts, signs and body language) paid off.

One was for ure, the prayers

ONE/ A9



THERE'S A STORY to tell about daring fishermen in a turbulent sea according to the art of Emanuel Soriano. His former colleague in the Cory Cabinet, then Defense Secretary Fidel Ramos drops in at his third exhibit ongoing at UP's Delaney Hall.

Art heals 'Reming' children in Bicol: To imagine is to hope

By Volt Contreras

IS THERE ROOM FOR ART IN AN EVACUAtion center? Can creativity still spring from the silence of a rape victim or the shame of a prostituted woman? So what if an orphan doodles, or if a battered wife prefers her sky red and not blue?

Perhaps the answers can be gleaned from a drawing by 10-year-old Francis Basas who saw his home vanish in the mudflow unleashed by Supertyphoon "Reming" in Albay on Nov. 30.

In an "art workshop" held last month not far from an evacuation center in Daraga town, Basas produced two pieces.

One depicted, in intense pen strokes, how the muddy torrent engulfed the houses and trees in his neighborhood, and how he—a tiny stick figure in the terrible scene—clung for dear life to the last tree standing.

The other is a happy, cartoon-like "family portrait" of the Basas household, including Francis' father and elder brother and sister who did not survive Reming. Notably absent in the drawing were his three other siblings who also died but whose bodies were never found.

"The three missing family members—the fact that he did not put them there—could mean that there's still no closure for the boy," art scholar Flaudette May Datuin said in the course of analyzing the outputs of the two-day workshop.

Datuin is part of a trio of women in the Philippine art community who believe they are helping distressed people who have needs that go beyond material or financial aid, physical care, or professional counseling.

Since March last year, Datuin, visual artist Alma Quinto and gallery owner Norma Lion-

ART HEALS/ A8

THE FIERCE LINES (at left) of Francis Basas, 10, stream from his memory of the torrential flooding of mud that engulfed trees and houses including his own. At extreme right, the green marks the spot where Francis is clinging for dear life to the lone tree standing.

DADDY'S GIRLS. Frankie, 6, and Miel, 2, with their favorite senator at mom's birthday concert last month.

One product, one town: Local yet global

By Ronnel W. Domingo

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE P5,000 grow into P1.5 million?

Just 30 pairs of idle hands.

Until 1990, the wives of farmers and fishers in Tubigon town in Bohol used to sit out their days just waiting for their husbands to return from work. At times, some of them would get a chance to add to their families' income by selling fish in the neighborhood.

But they never had a sustained means of earning money.

Then, in 1990, they were organized into the Tubigon Loomweavers Association.

With a P5,000 grant from the municipal government and the rudiments of weaving that had been passed down for generations, the women built an enterprise that is now the Tubigon Loomweavers Multi-purpose Cooperative (TLMPC).

After years of self-improvement and hard work, P5,000 is what each member earns monthly from the business.

The Tubigon undertaking is part of the One Town One Product (Otop) program, which collectively accounted for P1.81 billion in domestic sales and $92.23 million in export revenues in 2006.

Trade Undersecretary Carissa Cruz-Evangelista, coordinator of the pro-

ONE PRODUCT/ A6

No. 1 rating takes toll on Kiko's Frankie

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE 90-DAY CAMPAIGN PERIOD FOR the May senatorial elections has taken its toll on independent candidate Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan's daughter Frankie.

Pangilinan, who topped the Social Weather Stations' latest survey on senatorial preferences, admitted that being No. 1 in the poll did not come easy, especially to members of his family.

NO. 1 RATING/ A6

EZ2 SIX DIGIT
23 11 | 6 7 5 6 7 4
Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening
3 7 2 | 3 4 2
(All in exact order)
6/42 LUZON/VIS-MIN
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P14,446,197.00

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 2007

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY LAW DE GUZMAN, INQUIRER RESEARCH/03/10/07 SOURCE PAGASA

US Congress to probe political killings

Hearings set March 14 on instigation of Fil-Am, party-list groups

By Jerome Aning

THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEES OF both the United States House of Representatives and the Senate will conduct separate hearings on the political killings in the Philippines.

Rep. Tom Lantos (Democrat, Calif.) will hold a briefing in the House foreign relations committee on the Philippine human rights issue at 10 a.m. on March 14 in Washington D.C. while Sen. Barbara Boxer (Democrat Calif.), chair of the East Asia sub-Committee of the Senate, will also hold a hearing at 2:30 p.m. the same day.

The US congressional hearings were the result of grassroots lobbying by Filipino-American organizations that included the United Methodist Church and the militant party-list group Partido ng Manggagawa (PM).

The hearings also came on the heels of the recent critical statements by US Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie Kenney and the US state department on the human rights situation in the country.

US Embassy spokesperson Matthew Lussenhop said it was the embassy's understanding that the US Senate subcommittee on Asia would hold a hearing on the human rights situation in the Philippines, but declined to elaborate.

"We would not want to speculate on meaning, content or outcome of the hearing," he said.

The PM called on the US Congress to condemn the spate of extrajudicial killings of workers and peasant leaders in the Philippines.

The Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches yesterday also issued another statement condemning the extrajudicial killings.

"All the killings of journalists and left-wing advocates in recent times have given the Philippines a bad reputation; more important than the matter of reputation is the loss of precious lives," PCEC's executive committee said in a statement.

A representative of the PM, Pastor Israel Alvaran of the United Methodist Church, will lobby on behalf of labor party-list group in the US Congress.

"We would like the US Congress to take note of the fact that the iron hand of repression is bearing down heavy on the working class movement in the Philippines," Alvaran said.

Alvaran will carry a letter of appeal from PM party-list Rep. Renato Magtubo calling on the US Congress to speak out against repression of human and labor rights.

"We are willing to work in the belly of the beast in order to stay the iron hand of repression by the Arroyo regime and its fascist military. We ask our fellow American legislators to stand for labor rights and civil liberties in the Philippines," Magtubo said.

He added: It is in the common interest of the peoples of America and the Philippines. The killings of activists must stop. The urban communities must be demilitarized. The harassment of militant party-lists must end."

Alvaran said that from the ranks of the PM alone, three labor union presidents and Ka Popoy Lagman had been assassinated since the assumption to power of President Macapagal-Arroyo. Another union president and leader of the PM was ambushed but survived during the tenure of controversial Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan in Leyte.

The PCEC said it supported the investigations of the United Nations and the Philippine Commission on Human Rights to establish the facts and find out the truth as well. It also praised the Supreme Court for setting up special courts to try cases of extrajudicial killings. *With Tarra Quismundo*

Gov't offers Moros right of self-determination

CAMP DARAPANAN, SULTAN KUdarat—The government has offered Muslims in Mindanao the right of self-determination, a move that the head of the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front said was a breakthrough in the talks to end one of the world's longest running Muslim insurgencies.

Negotiations between government and rebel teams have been stalled since September, but there have been informal contacts.

At one such meeting in December, the government offered to recognize the right of the Muslims to self-determination, which it has never done in over three decades of conflict and intermittent negotiations.

"It can be a breakthrough, we appreciate this development, we feel it is an advancement in the search for peace in Mindanao," MILF chair Ibrahim Murad told reporters in his jungle camp yesterday.

"It is a breakthrough, it is a break away from the past," Rudy Rodil, a history professor who is on the government peace panel, told reporters in nearby Cotabato City.

"I don't see how much farther we can go," he said.

The proposal has still to be discussed in formal talks, but both sides said these could take place within weeks, most likely in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

According to Rodil, the proposal would allow an autonomous Muslim state self-governance in all areas except defense, foreign affairs, the monetary system and the postal system.

"They will have to remain in the Philippines. We are not authorized to divide the country," he said.

A government peace deal in 1996 with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the country's oldest Muslim rebel group, did not go as far, although it did create a special region for Muslims, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

But the MNLF has split into various factions, and the 1996 deal is widely seen as ineffective.

"The experience of the MNLF is already enough," said Murad, the MILF chief, adding that his negotiating team would nail down as many details and commitments from the government as possible.

Rodil said the new offer was made based on an article in the Constitution that enshrines international law as the law of the land. Since the Philippines was a signatory to an international agreement on recognizing the rights of indigenous groups to self-determination, it could make the offer, he said.

But both sides said several hurdles remain before an agreement can be hammered out.

The MILF wants an expansion of the ARMM to include other Muslim-majority areas in the south, and the two sides are at odds over the number of villages to be included and contiguity.

Furthermore, some parts of the proposal may have to be approved by the Congress, while the MILF will have to win over the MNLF and local Muslim clan leaders.

They will also have to ensure that intermittent clashes do not scuttle any deal. In one of the worst bouts of violence in recent months, at least 20 people were killed in a gun battle between government troops and MILF supporters near Cotabato City this week.

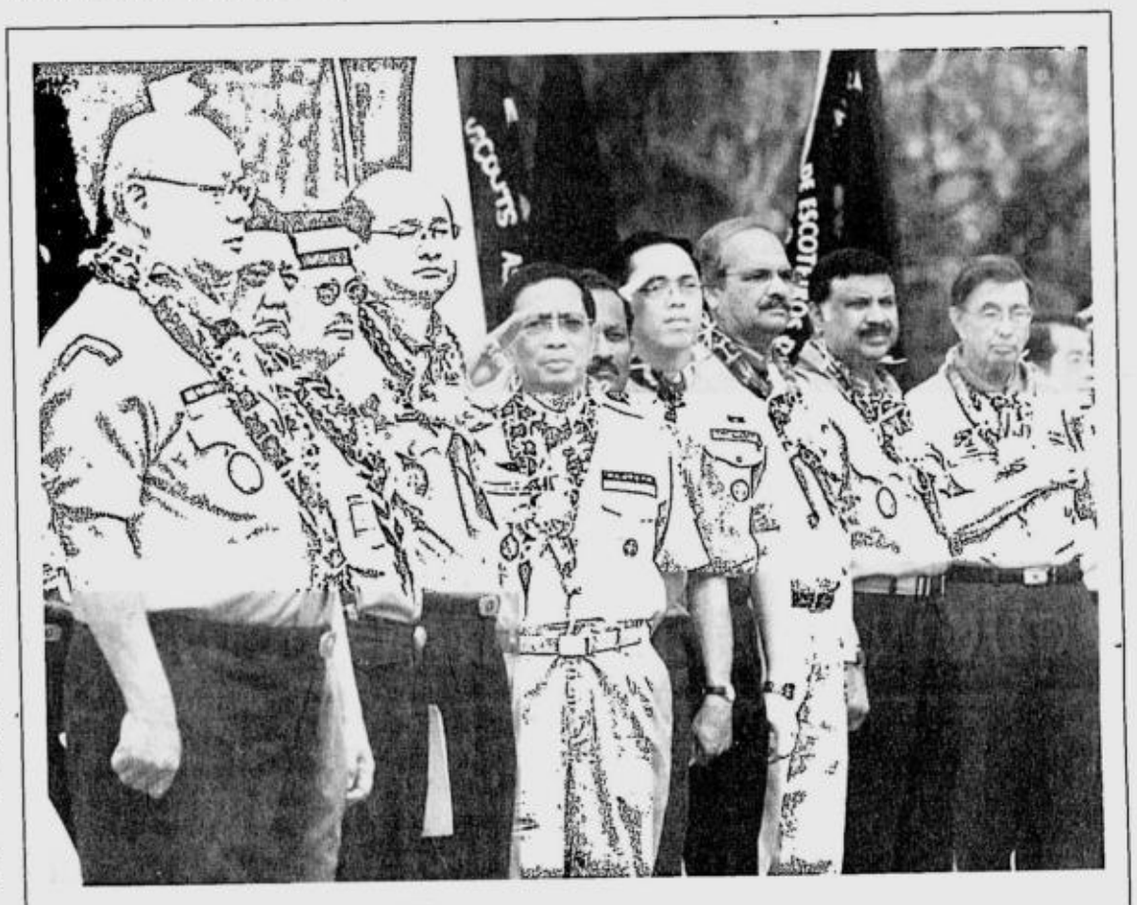
Murad, a mild-looking former civil engineer who was the MILF's former military chief, said a return to armed struggle was unlikely.

"We know that we cannot do this overnight, we have to thrash out all the problems," he said.

"As long as it is moving, we are willing to continue the peace process," he said.

Silvestre Afable, the government's chief negotiator, said last week that the government hoped to resume formal peace talks with the MILF before the elections on May 14. The talks, brokered by Malaysia since 2001, had stalled over the size and wealth of a proposed Muslim ancestral homeland.

In a March 2 news conference, Afable said there was already an informal understanding on the political aspect of the negotiations "but the issue on territory remained unresolved." *Reuters*



BOY SCOUTS' PEACE RELAY
Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay (center), national president of the Boy Scouts of the Philippines, leads scouts from the Asia-Pacific region in the culmination of the Rover Peace Baton at the Bonifacio Shrine near Manila City Hall on Saturday. From country to country, each segment of the Baton is carried by a group of scouts who travel by land, sea and air. The Philippines is the last leg of the relay which aims to heighten awareness for peace in the region. REM ZAMORA

LPG prices slashed by 56 centavos

FOR THE SECOND TIME THIS month, oil firms slashed the prices of liquefied petroleum gas by 56 centavos a kilogram, citing the decline in the international contract price of LPG.

Petron Corp. and Chevron Philippines Inc. cut prices by the same level at 12:01 a.m. today.

Data from the Department of Energy showed that the international contract price of LPG dropped by $20 per metric ton (MT) this month to $506 per MT from $526 per MT in February.

The end of the winter season in the western hemisphere contributed to the drop in international prices, as LPG is commonly used as a heating fuel by western countries.

The strong peso also helped bring down the overall costs for local LPG suppliers, giving them leeway to cut LPG prices.

The price of LPG in the international market was higher in January at $548.50 per MT compared to its December 2006 price of $490.50 per MT.

The highest ever LPG international contract price was recorded in February last year at $625.50 per MT.

With the price adjustment, 11-kg LPG cylinders now cost P6.16 less.

Today's price reduction is the fourth for the year, with two of the price cuts taking place last month.

Oil firms have so far slashed LPG prices this year by a total of P2.24 per kg.

LPG prices now range between P443.48 and P493.84 per 11-kg cylinder, inclusive of the 12-percent value-added tax. *Abigail L. Ho*

Pinay's kin still in dark about her whereabouts

By Tarra Quismundo

SHE COULD BE TAKING REFUGE in her hometown, staying incognito in à Metro Manila neighborhood, or hiding in Nigeria.

One thing is certain in the mystery behind the disappearance of Filipino businesswoman Josiebeth Foroozan: No one knows where she is.

While the Department of Foreign Affairs has reported that Foroozan returned to the Philippines on a flight to Manila via Germany on Feb. 10, her family in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, is in the dark about her whereabouts.

"We haven't heard from her. My sister hasn't contacted us... On the one hand, we are happy that at least she's alive. But she hasn't called us yet," Jane Gregorio, Foroozan's younger sister, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday.

"Until now, we are waiting for her call... We respect her decision not to call us yet. She might have her reasons for keeping quiet," Gregorio added in Filipino.

Foroozan, a resident of Nigeria for 17 years, was reported kidnapped on Feb. 7 by her Iranian husband, Manouch Foroozan.

But the DFA said on Friday that while the supposed kidnapping occurred amid a spate of abductions of foreign nationals in oil-rich Nigeria, Foroozan's case was not part of the statistics.

The DFA has referred the case to the Department of Justice for investigation.

Foroozan's alleged abduction occurred a day after unidentified gunmen took hostage Filipino oil worker Winston Helera, 51, while en route to the Owerri airport for his Lagos-bound flight.

Helera was released on Thursday, but details of his return to the country have yet to be announced.

In-law's call

Gregorio said all the family knew was based on "the call of my brother-in-law (Foroozan's husband) that my sister had been kidnapped."

"I don't know about the report that she was seen in Germany... But my brother-in-law would not make up stories," Gregorio said.

"But if she is already here, then we respect her decision not to contact us. We are giving her time, but of course we are worried," added Gregorio, one of Foroozan's two younger siblings, who recalled having "a happy conversation" with her on the phone in the last week of January.

Gregorio said her brother-in-law, with whom Foroozan has two children, has yet to contact the family. Thus, she could not say whether he had been informed of the DFA report ruling out abduction in Foroozan's case.

Of several Filipinos reported abducted in Nigeria since January, Foroozan is the only one yet to be accounted for.

A batch of 24 Filipino seafarers kidnapped by armed men off the oil-rich Delta State in southern Nigeria returned to the Philippines last month.

Partial lifting

Labor Secretary Arturo Brion yesterday announced the partial lifting of the ban on the deployment of Filipino workers to Nigeria and Lebanon.

Brion said the decision to partially lift the ban was in light of the "improved" security conditions in the two countries. *With a report from Jerome Aning*

DEAN OF CARTOONISTS CITED
Guadalupe V. Alcala (center), widow of pioneer cartoonist Lauro "Larry" Alcala, receives a posthumous Presidential Medal of Merit awarded to her husband. A social satirist, Alcala created 20 comic strips, including the popular "Kalabog en Bosyo," "Mang Ambo," "Siopawman," "Asyong Aksaya" and "Slice of Life." The Bicolano Fine Arts graduate of the University of the Philippines was known as the dean of Philippine cartoonists and was nominated for a National Artist award in 2001. He died in 2002 at 75. Also present at the awarding in Malacanang were Alcala's son Lauro Jr., daughter-in-law Menchu (left), granddaughter Ana and sister Helena A. Obial. Other cartoonists who received the presidential award as part of the National Arts Month celebration were Antonio Velasquez, Mars Ravelo, Francisco Coching and Carlo Caparas.

Cuba donates drugs for typhoon victims

CUBA HAS DONATED $22,000 worth of medicines to the Philippines as aid for displaced families in the Bicol region which was devastated by Supertyphoon "Reming" last November.

Cuban Ambassador Jorge Rey Jimenez turned over the donation to Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo in a simple ceremony at the foreign affairs office.

"It constitutes for me an honor and responsibility to be the instrument through which the Cuban people wanted to send, to their brothers, the [Filipino] people, this modest contribution to alleviate the suffering of those that survived the tragic catastrophe of Typhoon Durian [Reming]," said Jimenez.

Romulo immediately turned over the medical aid to Dr. Maria Virginia Ala, officer in charge of the Department of Health's Bureau of International Health Cooperation. *Tarra Quismundo*

Leviste, docs could face contempt raps

FORMER BATANGAS GOVERNOR ANTONIO LEVIste was escorted back to the Makati City jail yesterday after more than two weeks in a hospital.

Leviste, the confessed killer of Rafael de las Alas, arrived at the jail at about 1:30 p.m. yesterday, four days after the Makati Regional Trial Court had directed jail warden Supt. Delvic Oreiro to return him to his cell.

State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco on Friday asked the court to cite Leviste and his doctors for indirect contempt for failing to heed the court order.

Velasco yesterday said the government would pursue the contempt charges against Leviste and his two Makati Medical Center (MMC) doctors, Reynato Kasilag and Ramon Liboro, for defying the court.

The 67-year-old Leviste was detained at the Makati jail since Feb. 8 while awaiting trial for the non-bailable charge of murder for the fatal shooting of his aide, De las Alas, on Jan. 12.

He was allowed leave on Feb. 23 to check into the MMC for treatment of hypertension and gastrointestinal bleeding.

Velasco said Kasilag and Liboro had endorsed Leviste's discharge from the hospital on March 7.

"They fooled not only the court but the people as well. They made a mockery of the criminal justice system," he said.

"They know we mean business. They should not mess with us and we will not hesitate to file criminal cases against them, including the MMC, for coddling an accused in a murder case," Velasco said.

On his arrival at the Makati jail yesterday, a four-person team from the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology took Leviste to the infirmary where a nurse checked his blood pressure. It was 130 over 90.

Oreiro, the jail warden, said they were keeping close tabs on Leviste's condition.

"His complexion is not as pale as before, his color has returned. But his blood pressure is still a bit high, I think," he said.

He said Leviste would remain in the infirmary until his condition stabilized.

"His condition is still critical. His illnesses are recurring and we cannot say for sure when he will be returned to his cell," Oreiro said in a phone interview.

He said Leviste, prisoner No. 517, will only be returned to his cell "once he is feeling better."

Julie M. Aurelio

Suspected phone hackers nabbed

EIGHT SUSPECTED MEMBERS OF AN INternational telephone hacking syndicate involved in defrauding millions of dollars from phone companies in the United States were arrested by the police in simultaneous raids yesterday in six cities in Metro Manila.

Supt. Joaquin Alva of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group National Capital Region (CIDG-NCR) said the eight—four men and four women—were arrested in the raids conducted in Quezon City, Taguig, Parañaque, Valenzuela, Caloocan and Manila.

The raids were carried out under a search warrant issued by Manila Judge Lucia Puruganan of the Regional Trial Court's Branch 30.

Alva identified the leader of the group as Mamoud Sahyeh Ogash Misyer, a 37-year-old Jordanian, who was arrested at his rented house in BF Homes in Parañaque City.

Misyer denied committing any crime, saying he lived off an allowance sent to him by his parents.

It was also learned that Misyer was arrested in 2003 for a similar offense in Makati City. But the case was dismissed.

Another suspect was identified as Emma Joy Lomibao who was arrested in Cubao, Quezon City.

Recovered from the suspects were several telecommunications equipment.

Police said the group operated a multimillion-dollar hacking operation worldwide.

According to Alva, the suspects stole phone numbers in the US and sold them worldwide for amounts ranging from $100 to $11,000.

"Anyone can use the numbers to make calls. The costs of the calls come up in the bills of the original owners. The operation is stopped when the line is cut," Alva said.

He added that the CIDG had been working on the case for the past three years now.

Alcuin Papa

Cesar Montano not giving up

By Cynthia D. Balana and Tony S. Bergonia

TAGBILARAN, BOHOL—ACTOR Cesar Montano yesterday said he had no intention of withdrawing from the senatorial race just because of his poor showing in the initial opinion surveys.

Speaking to reporters before the start of the administration Team Unity's campaign rally here, Montano said he was determined to pursue his candidacy and expressed confidence that he would win.

"I will not be here if I'm not running. I will help in Team Unity's 12-0 victory," said Montano, a native of Bohol whose real name is Cesar Manhilot.

Montano has made his absence felt in several campaign sorties and some staffers of Team Unity candidates took this as a sign that the actor might be withdrawing from the race.

Sources in the Team Unity ticket said Montano's campaign has been bogged down by the lack of money and by the failure of the administration officials who are running the campaign to deliver the goods.

"It's the money," according to one source.

Montano, a popular movie actor who gave up a deal to appear in a P30-million TV series in order to run, came out 18th in the latest Social Weather Stations poll of voter preferences.

Palace source said funds promised for Montano have not been delivered.

It is estimated that for a senatorial candidate to mount an effective nationwide campaign, he or she would need from P150 million to P300 million.

Promised funds

A source close to the President said Gabriel Claudio, the presidential political adviser, had promised funds for the campaign and media expenses of Montano but failed to deliver these.

It was Claudio who brokered the deal for Montano to run for senator under the administration ticket.

A source in Claudio's office said Montano was not the only Team Unity candidate to have complained about the delay in the release of funds.

"It's a common occurrence now in the administration ticket," said the source.

Two other candidates who are said to be complaining are Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson and Jamalul Kiram.

The source close to Ms Arroyo said a group of business supporters of the President had contributed funds from which P50 million each was released to several candidates.

Late entry

Montano's late entry into the ticket made him miss the release of the funds, the source said.

Several Team Unity candidates said the administration machinery was spending for hotel bookings, transportation and other campaign expenses.

Other candidates have been able to raise campaign funds for themselves, said the sources, and were not that dependent on the Lakas-NUCD, the main administration party.

Another Montano complaint, said a Lakas-NUCD official, was his being relegated to the background during campaign rallies despite his being the most popular of the candidates.

"He's not the main actor in these rallies. He's not the star," said one source.

This tended to confuse people who think that Montano was just a show biz guest, said another source.

"They haven't associated him with his candidacy," said the source.

Gov. Erico Aumentado said the province was fully behind Montano's candidacy and that of another Boholano, Sonia Roco, a candidate of the Genuine Opposition.

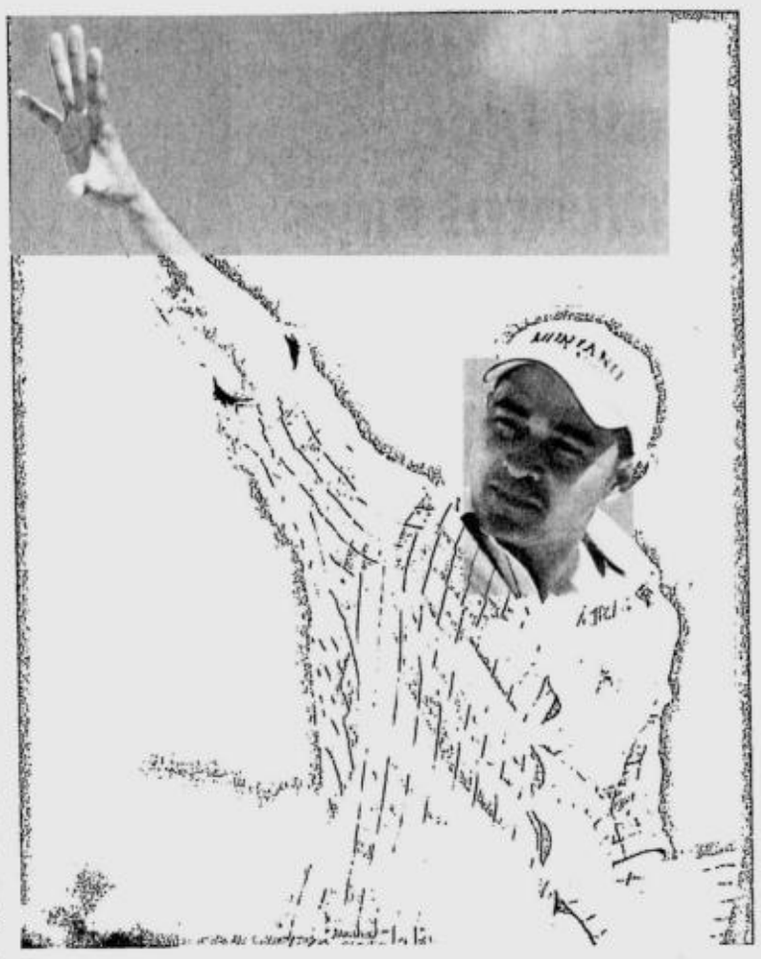
Roco is the daughter of the late Bohol Rep. Pablo Malasarte and hails from Bilar town.

Montano's father was a former law partner of Aumentado. Montano's family is from Baclayon town.

Aumentado said he told the President that he could not promise to deliver a 12-0 victory for Team Unity but only a majority vote.

"We will try as best we can and of course a 12-0 sweep is our target. But Bohol is definitely Arroyo country," the governor said.

Bohol has 600,000 voters but only 500,000 voted in the 2004 elections.



ACTOR CESAR Montano, shown here in Bohol, says he's still running, despite his poor showing in the surveys and a campaign that has been bogged down by a lack of money and the failure of officials running the campaign to deliver the goods. LYN RILLON

Ralph: Vilma likely to heed clamor of Batangueños

By Cynthia D. Balana

CEBU CITY—LIPA MAYOR VILma Santos will likely heed the clamor of her supporters to seek the governorship of Batangas under the ruling Lakas-CMD, according to her husband, reelectionist Sen. Ralph Recto.

Recto, who spoke with Manila-based reporters at the end of the two-day conference of the Philippine Councilors League here on Friday night, said his wife would announce her decision tomorrow.

"She will make the final announcement. This is just my tip to you: What she said earlier was that she would not think as a wife, a mother, or an actress, but as a leader. What do you think a leader would do?" said Recto, who added that he was his wife's "consultant" and she was his "senior adviser."

Recto, a candidate of the administration's Team Unity, said Santos "continued to pray" for divine guidance and had been consulting religious and political leaders.

"Anyone running for an important office, be it for governor or for senator, or even for councilor, needs a lot of prayer. You have to consult a lot of people. It is never an easy decision," he said.

Equity of incumbent

Reminded that Gov. Armand Sanchez, who is now with Kampi, President Macapagal-Arroyo's party, would enjoy the administration's support based on the principle of the equity of the incumbent, Recto said Santos' fate would rest solely on the people of Batangas.

He said the issue of the incumbent governor had "no bearing" on whether his wife would seek the governorship or not.

As for his elder brother, Vice Gov. Ricky Recto, the opposition's gubernatorial candidate in Batangas, Recto said he was hopeful that their differences would be ironed out.

The vice governor had wanted Santos to back out of the race so as not to split the Recto votes and raise his chances of winning.

"Whatever differences we have are not political but purely personal. I pray for him. I pray that he makes the right judgment, if he runs for governor," Recto said of his brother.

He added: "In the case of Vilma, I think the majority of the Batangueños, political and civil society leaders and trade-based organizations will support her."

Governors' stand

Speaking for the League of Provinces of the Philippines, Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone said the group had not made an official stand to junk Recto if his wife went up against Sanchez.

Evardone, who is also the media director of Team Unity, said some governors had only expressed their individual stand.

"Our friends merely voiced out their stand that they will support our colleague (Sanchez) in Batangas. But the league will not junk Senator Recto," Evardone said in a phone interview.

Working majority

"Our official stand is to ensure a 12-0 victory for the administration because we want at least a working majority in the Senate to push President Arroyo's reforms," he said.

Evardone said the governors were bound by the resolution they passed last Wednesday vowing to support the entire Team Unity ticket.

"They just expressed their individual sentiments but our collective stand is to support all candidates," he said.

Evardone was reacting to an INQUIRER report saying the governors would not support Recto if Santos ran for governor.

Sulu Gov. Benjamin Loong and Agusan del Sur Gov. Adolph Edward Plaza told the INQUIRER that the governors stated their position during their Wednesday meeting, shortly before they headed to a dinner hosted by Ms Arroyo in Malacañang.

Loong said the governors' position was relayed to the President through Team Unity campaign manager Reli German. *With a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana*

How can bets recoup funds, Nikki asks

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

GENUINE OPPOSITION SENAtorial candidate Anna Dominique "Nikki" Coseteng said the public should look into the "morality" of candidates spending hundreds of millions of pesos in the election campaign.

Although trailing in the latest Social Weather Stations survey, Coseteng said she will spend the same amount she spent in her two successful bids for the Senate more than a decade ago.

Coseteng was a senator for two terms, from 1992 to 1995 and from 1995 to 2001.

"When I decided to run again, I decided to spend exactly the same amount I spent before, because people already voted me twice. My track record is there for all to see," she told the INQUIRER.

P10M at most

She said she spent "around P8 million, at most P10 million" in 1995, when she won under the Nationalist People's Coalition ticket.

"Anything more than that, how can I justify it?" said Coseteng. "If I'm going to spend hundreds of millions of pesos, how can we justify being in the Senate? Why do you want to elect us if our preoccupation is how to get our money back?" added Coseteng, who admittedly has the fewest campaign materials among GO's 11 candidates.

Coseteng said voters should wonder how candidates who spend hundreds of millions for their campaign would eventually recoup their expenses.

A study by Nielsen Media Research Philippines showed that the top campaign spender is administration senatorial candidate Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay, who spent P33.4 million on TV ads in the first two weeks of the campaign.

Reelectionist Senators Manuel Villar and Ralph Recto spent P30.29 million and P22.79 million, respectively during the same period.

The Fair Election Act allows candidates to spend P3 for every registered voter. With around 45 million registered voters, each candidate may spend as much as P135 million.

ELECTION '07

Charter change 1st debate topic

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

CHARTER CHANGE, THE ISSUE that pitted the Arroyo administration against the opposition, as well as various sectors of society late last year, is coming back to haunt the administration's Team Unity.

In the first of a series of televised debates among the senatorial aspirants scheduled for Monday, the organizers have chosen the contentious issue of amending the Constitution as the first topic.

Reelectionist Sen. Edgardo Angara of Team Unity, Rep. Francis "Chiz" Escudero of the Genuine Opposition and lawyer Oliver Lozano representing the independent candidates will square off in the debate sponsored by the Commission on Elections and the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV).

The debate will be broadcast over the ANC News channel.

Team Unity media director Ben Evardone, one of the architects of the doomed people's initiative, said the topic was chosen by the organizers of the debate.

"It's an issue against the government but we feel that there is a need to debate on why we are really pushing for Charter change. It is a legitimate issue for the debate," Evardone said in a phone interview.

Evardone said Team Unity was neither afraid nor ashamed to tackle the need to change the country's political structure and fundamental law in order to achieve progress.

But Evardone admitted that he balked at the proposition crafted by the organizers: Are you in favor of Charter change now?

Comelec: Time short for printing of ballots

THERE MAY NOT BE ENOUGH time to print ballots and other paper paraphernalia in time for the May polls, according to a senior election official.

Commission on Elections executive director Jose Pio Joson told reporters yesterday the National Printing Office might have a hard time finishing the printing of ballots and other official papers.

Printing 45 million ballots alone would take three to four months, he said.

The Comelec has no final statistics on the number of voters expected to troop to poll precincts on May 14. Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos said the final figures would be out this month.

"There may not be enough time. This does not include delays in transporting the ballots and other materials," Joson said.

The NPO would need 45 days if they were to print 1 million ballots per day, and an additional two weeks to print election returns, statements of votes, certificates of canvass and voters' registration records, the official said.

"The NPO is printing all these election paraphernalia together so there's apprehension on the part of the Comelec that if the printing of one group of documents is delayed, everything will be delayed," he said.

The NPO began printing ballots only last Monday.

Joson said the first batch of ballots and other forms should be ready between March 12 and 15 for the 500,000 overseas absentee voters, who are scheduled to vote beginning April 14, one month ahead of the regular election. *Jerome Aning*

Watchdog would ban phone calls to ensure clean elections

By Tarra Quismundo

NO MORE "HELLO ... GARCIing."

Under the action plan for clean and honest elections proposed by the newly organized Philippine Election Forum (PEF), it will be clearly prohibited for "election workers and officials to accept personal calls from political candidates."

The proposal is a clear response to the "Hello ... Garci" conversation between President Macapagal-Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano in 2004 which sparked a political crisis—Cabinet split, two impeachment attempts and a failed coup—that lingers to this day.

This time around, one of 15 draft PEF resolutions declares that "unavoidable exceptions to the phone call prohibition should be logged," noting the name of the caller and the time.

The PEF was organized in February in response to a call by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines for "stakeholders" to participate in the conduct of anomaly-free elections, said the forum's secretary general, Virgilio Hernandez.

Core convenors are the Commsion on Elections, the Philippine National Police, the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Department of Education, the National Citizen's Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel), the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches, the Far Eastern Broadcasting Company and other civic organizations and business groups.

At its plenary meeting at the Philippine Trade Training Center in Pasay City last week, over 200 observers and participants representing nonpartisan government agencies, people's organizations, church and civic groups, and professional and youth organizations attended.

"This is very encouraging ... Bad elements or people with criminal designs will not succeed with the force that we have gathered now," said Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos, who had been put on the defensive by the embarrassing "Hello ... Garci" tapes and other past allegations of vote-rigging.

Correction

IN THE MARCH 9 issue, the "Goings On" portion of the Lifestyle Section on Page E4 misstated the date of the free concert featuring compositions in the "The Easter Journey" album. The concert was held at the Ateneo High School Chapel on March 10—not 20—at 7 p.m.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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H.M. Ulanday; 84

HELEN MANAOIS ULANday passed away in Houston, Texas, on Feb. 26. She was 84.

Her remains will arrive in Manila on March 15 and will be brought to Arlington Memorial Chapels on Araneta Avenue, Quezon City for necrological services on March 16 and 17. Interment will be on March 18 at 3 p.m.

Pichay: I'm happy with my pace

TEAM UNITY SENATORIAL CANdidate Prospero Pichay said he was not at all disheartened by the recent Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey which placed him between the 22nd and 24th slots despite his being the highest election ad spender.

Pichay of the administration's slate said he was quite satisfied with the pace of the campaign. In a statement sent to the INQUIRER yesterday, he noted that the SWS survey conducted from Feb. 24 to 27 or during the second week of the campaign, also showed that voter awareness of his candidacy had pole-vaulted to 84 percent from a mere 30 percent in November last year.

"In the November 2006 SWS survey, I was only ranked from 46 to 51," said Pichay, a congressman from Surigao del Sur.

In answer to the ribbings he has been getting for his P33-million advertising bill, Pichay expressed confidence that his survey ranking would dramatically improve as more people became aware of his candidacy, his platform of government and track record.

Premature celebration

Meanwhile, his colleagues and allies in the House chided the opposition: Don't celebrate prematurely.

"Leading and winning are two different things," House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles said in a statement on Thursday.

"Much like a horse race, it's good to lead from the start but it's the finish line and final push that would make winning possible for the horses," Nograles said.

"(We) are still in the first third of the campaign, with almost two months more to go," he added.

Rearrangement

Rep. Antonio Cuenco (Lakas, Cebu) backed Nograles: "It's still too early to even say if the survey shows the trend of how the May polls will turn out. A lot of factors will cause a rearrangement in the candidates' ranking in the next few weeks."

The SWS survey had shown independent candidate Francis Pangilinan and the Genuine Opposition led by Loren Legarda taking the first six of the 12 Senate seats that are up for grabs in the midterm polls.

"GO may be leading the surveys for now, but this does not mean they will win in the election, said Nograles.

Atienza: No quarter for oil firms

By Tina G. Santos

MANILA MAYOR LITO ATIENZA WILL MEET next week with officials of the big three oil companies—Chevron (formerly Caltex), Petron and Shell—to discuss the phaseout of the Pandacan oil depot.

"I'll sit down with them and tell them the position of the government, but not (for them) to appeal the decision," Atienza said, adding that the meeting is expected to take place Monday or Tuesday.

On Wednesday, the Supreme Court's first division ordered the city government of Manila to immediately enforce Ordinance No. 8027 reclassifying the Pandacan and Sta. Ana areas from "industrial" to "commercial."

"We'll listen to them but they can't keep on reciting the same litany about the adverse effects if they move out," the mayor added.

In the past, oil companies had often warned that the closure of the oil depot would lead to a disruption in supplies and increase the prices of petroleum products.

Although Atienza said he understood that the phaseout would take time, he said he would abide by the Supreme Court decision by immediately implementing the ordinance.

"The oil depot poses a clear and present danger. It's hazardous to the residents," he stressed.

Surrounded by residential and commercial establishments, the 30-ha oil depot is one of the areas immediately placed under tight watch and secured whenever the police raise the security alert.

The sprawling oil depot, which sits on the southern bank of the Pasig River near Malacañang, supplies about half of Luzon's fuel needs and about 82 percent of Metro Manila's gasoline and diesel requirements.

"We understand that they can't do it (phaseout) overnight, it's such a gigantic effort," Atienza said. "But the decision of the government should be loud and clear. In fact, they should have moved out a long time ago."

The ordinance was passed in 2001 but was not implemented. Instead, Atienza and the Department of Energy signed a memorandum of understanding with the oil companies which agreed to scale down their operations and install safety measures.

The high court said the ordinance was necessary to remove the risk of the oil depot being attacked by terrorists and bringing harm to Manila's residents.

Builder gets deadline on Naia 3 repairs

By Tarra Quismundo

THE GOVERNMENT HAS GIVEN THE Japanese contractor of the mothballed Ninoy Aquino International Airport's Terminal 3 15 days to act on its request to repair the facility's damaged areas, structural flaws that forced the deferment of the terminal's partial opening.

The Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) sent a letter last Friday to Takenaka Corp. after the two firms that it had contracted to assess the new terminal's structural integrity, reported that Naia 3 was suffering from structural defects that would expose the public to a "life safety risk" when the terminal is opened.

Airport officials had scheduled a "rolling opening," a test run involving a few flights, at the terminal for the end of March, exactly a year after the terminal's gypsum board ceiling collapsed.

The supposedly state-of-the-art facility is touted to become Naia's flagship terminal, with a passenger capacity of around 13 million passengers a year.

Tirso Serrano, the airport development chief, said the MIAA would "follow the process" and wait for Takenaka's answer.

He said the report of the consultants, TCGI Engineers Inc. and the Ove Arup & Partners, were sent to Takenaka.

"The standard period to reply is 15 days... the bottom line is to keep the terminal safe from potential technical issues," said Serrano.

Miaa said the terminal's new opening date would depend on when Takenaka can finish the repairs.

The engineering consultants have recommended that "remedial work" should be done on "a number of beams, girders and post-tension slabs, as well as columns and piles."

Serrano said the Japanese firm has been asked to shoulder the cost of the recommended repairs, which has yet to be estimated.

Takenaka was contracted by the Naia 3's builder, the Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (Piatco), to construct the multimillion-dollar facility. Piatco, a consortium that includes the German-based Fraport, lost the terminal to the government after the Supreme Court voided its contract for fraud and graft.

The government took over Naia 3 after it made a partial payment of P3.2 billion to Piatco for the terminal's total construction cost, pending the resolution of a number of court cases. Piatco is asking for a $500 million (P25 billion) compensation while the government has placed the total cost of building the facility at $320 million (P16 billion).

National Scientist Jose R. Velasco cited

THE PHILIPPINE SCIENCE COMMUNITY paid tribute recently to National Scientist Jose R. Velasco who died on Jan. 24 at the age of 90.

The National Academy of Science and Technology, friends and relatives cited Velasco, one of the early graduates of the University of the Philippines at Los Baños (1916), for his leadership as a science educator, as well as his pioneering studies on plant nutrition and *cadang cadang*, a devastating disease of the coconut plant.

The family of the late Dr. Velasco expressed their gratitude to all those who "uplifted us with their presence and lessened the sorrow of losing someone so dear."

Velasco earned his Ph.D. in Plant Physiology at the University of California at Berkeley in 1949. The recipient of many science awards and fellowships, he was conferred the status of "National Scientist" in 1998 by then President Fidel V. Ramos. He was also recognized several times for his civic and community involvements, especially in his home province of Cavite.

Married to Felicidad Ibañez, a school teacher from Luisiana, Laguna, he had eight children namely, Dolores, Victor Hugo, Vladimir, Jose Alberto, Jaime Luciano, Maria Natividad,Vernon Raymond and Luis Rey,who is now the chancellor of UP Los Baños.

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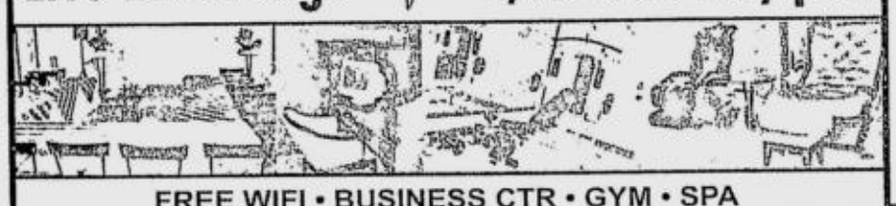
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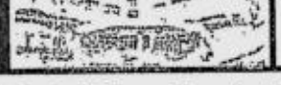

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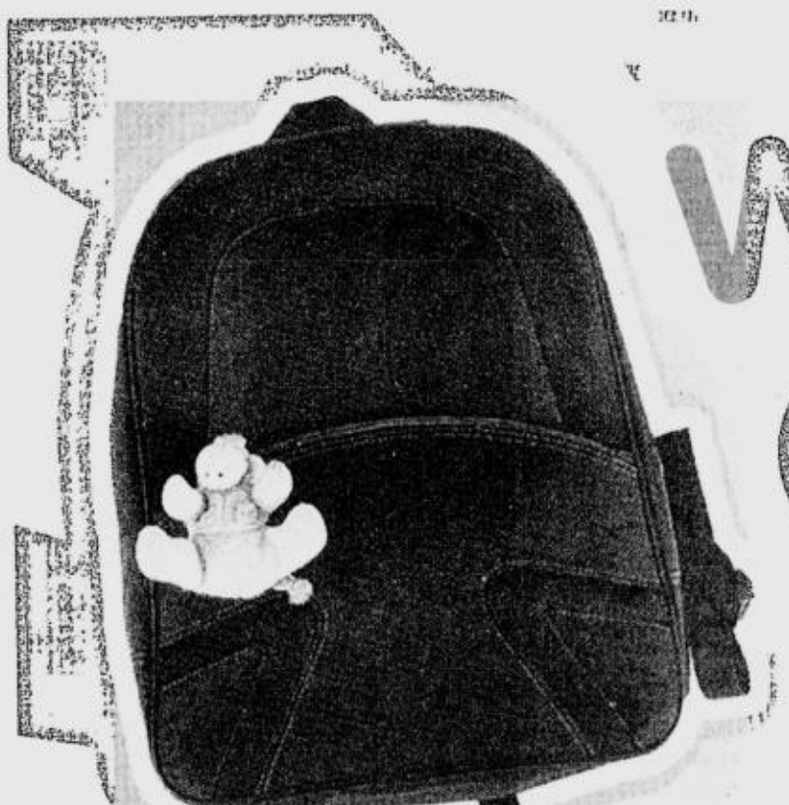
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One product, one town: Local yet global

From page A1

gram, said Otop enterprises represent P1.89 billion of investments laid out last year as well as 70,609 new jobs created.

Otop started in the Philippines in 2004 following the success of the One Village One Product (Ovop) concept in Japan, which is also being tried in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, some provinces of China, and some cities in the United States.

The movement took root in 1979 in Japan's Oita Prefecture.

Ovop required people to take up a product or industry distinctive to the region and cultivate it into a nationally and even globally accepted one.

"We started with practically no skills but we learned about designing products through training provided by the DTI (Department of Trade and Industry)," TLMPC president Jocelyn Arocha said in an interview.

"Now, we have a greater variety in our designs, and we also do requests from buyers."

The women also received help from both the local government and the trade and agrarian reform departments in building a facility that could accommodate 25 hand looms.

TLMPC uses as raw material the raffia fiber, which is obtained from the young shoot or leaf of the buri palm.

Raffia can be made into wall coverings, upholstery and wrapping materials, hats, mats, bags, and decors, but the group concentrates on rolls of fabric, place mats, table runners, tea mats and coasters.

They sell to retailers based in Metro Manila but some export their products.

"To meet demand and delivery commitments, we also (subcontract jobs to) at least 100 nonmembers who work in their homes," Arocha says.

Cooperative's assets

Membership peaked to about 100, all women, but has shrunk back to 35 because some have relocated and some have "retired" and let their daughters take part in the enterprise.

At its peak, the cooperative's assets—including the building, equipment, inventory and retained earnings allocated to working capital and operational expenses—reached some P1.5 million.

Arocha says this value had been pared down because those who did not renew membership were given going-away packages that included their shares as owners and certain amounts of retained value commensurate to their years as members.

With 16 years of experience, TLMPC is again building up its size and value.

Arocha says DTI-provided training helped nurture the business with product development know-how, which prepared the group for trade fairs, exhibits and other marketing activities.

Otop success

"Members were also trained to ... enhance productivity and improve workplace organization and work processes," Arocha says. "Simplification of work and having roles defined helped minimize internal conflicts."

Within this year, TLMPC expects to move into a new building that can house twice the number of looms.

The raffia ware of Tubigon is just one of the 1,240 products listed in the Otop program.

Magsaysay awardee

Oita governor Morihiko Hiramatsu, who pushed the Ovop concept and helped spread it, won the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1995 for his contribution toward the economic independence of Asian countries.

Ovop's mantras are "local yet global," self-reliance and creativity, and human resource development—what the Tubigon women have adhered to. The raffia enterprise has even been named a model Otop of Central Visayas.

In Sibagat town of Agusan del Sur, members of the Sibagat Abaca Weavers Association (Sawa) tell of an inspiring story.

This nongovernment organization currently groups 35 member-weavers who are assured of a daily income of P100 to P150, aside from dividends. It also provides livelihood to abaca farmers, as well as to haulers who deliver the products.

Sawa makes rolls of fabric from *sinamay* or the first-class fiber from the Tagongon and Laylay varieties of abaca. The fabric is used as material for handicraft, housewares and fashion accessories, which are sold in the domestic and export markets.

The Sibagat weavers have received help from national government agencies as well as the municipal government.

Support from Australia

Their newest supporter is the Australian government, which provided a P1.4-million grant to the association. Sawa will use the fund as a working capital, to buy looms and spend in capacity-building and training programs.

Growing demand for sinamay products has prompted Sawa to plan on increasing the workforce to 109 weavers, and tap additional suppliers.

The Sibagat experience shows the criteria for a product or industry to be declared an Otop enteprise—a reliable resource base for raw materials; an aggressive core of producers; a local government able and willing to help; and an ability to attract support from government services.

Ironically, it is usual for a successful Otop enterprise to put pressure on a "reliable supply of raw materials," such that producers must grow in number as well as in productivity to keep up with demand.

This is what is happening in Northern Samar, where Karangyan Bangus Products is the main processor of raw bangus in San Jose town, whose mariculture zone was ravaged by Typhoon Milenyo.

Abundant resources

But while Karangyan Bangus reports that the supply of fresh fish is "barely enough to meet various orders that keep coming daily," the group is working earnestly to make good its commitments to the Jollibee and Cindy's food chain outlets in neighboring Tacloban City.

Karangayan Bangus, which started in 2005, employs directly 55 workers and indirectly benefits 256 others.

According to marketing manager Nemia Loyola, the enterprise is trying to raise P2.9 million to build a processing plant and buy equipment.

"The country's resources for products and services are so abundant that they are just there before our eyes waiting to be tapped," Evangelista says.

"And once these resources are tapped, the enterprises created or supported mobilizes communities by its very needs—more workers, more raw materials, more product innovations, more support from government, business chambers, and allied enterprises, more markets to reach," she adds.

From flowers to seaweeds

Since 2004, some 1,200 Otop enterprises have been identified around the country.

These include different vegetable products in Benguet, coffee in Ifugao, eco-cultural tourism in Mt. Province, fossilized flowers in Quirino, processed food in Cagayan, processed fruits in the Calabarzon region, dried seaweeds in Masbate, dried squid in Southern Leyte, mud crab in Northern Samar, rubber and seaweeds in Zamboanga Sibugay, and banana in Sultan Kudarat.

Some Otop products are themselves raw materials, like corn husk in Banga, South Cotabato, salt in Badoc, Ilocos Norte, pebbles in Luna, La Union and sand and gravel in San Jacinto, Pangasinan.

Others are very hard to find, like gold in Lacub, Abra, and in Pasil, Kalinga.

Still others focus on skills like information- and communication-based services in Cainta, Rizal, and Naga City in Camarines Sur.

"Surely, there is a product or service waiting to be started or given a boost anywhere in the country," Evangelista says. "And among strangers, conversation starters could go from 'what is your province?' to 'what is your Otop?'"

ONE TOWN ONE PRODUCT enterprises get help from product development to marketing activities like trade fairs and exhibits. Otop started in the Philippines in 2004 after the concept in Japan.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, March 11, 2007
3rd Sunday of Lent

1st Reading: **Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15**

"I AM" sent me to you.

Moses pastured the sheep of Jethro his father-in-law, priest of Midian. One day he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the Mountain of God.

The Angel of Yahweh appeared to him by means of a flame of fire in the middle of a bush. Moses saw that although the bush was on fire it did not burn up. Moses thought, "I will go and see this amazing sight, why is the bush not burning up?"

Yahweh saw that Moses was drawing near to look, and God called to him from the middle of the bush, "Moses! Moses!" He replied, "Here I am." Yahweh said to him, "Do not come near; take off your sandals because the place where you are standing is holy ground." And God continued, "I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob."

Moses hid his face lest his eyes look on God. Yahweh said, "I have seen the humiliation of my people in Egypt and I hear their cry when they are cruelly treated by their taskmasters. I know their suffering. I have come down to free them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them up from that land to a beautiful spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the territory of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites.

Moses answered God, "If I go to the Israelites and say to them: 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' they will ask me: 'What is his name?' What shall I answer them?"

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO AM. This is what you will say to the sons of Israel: 'I AM sent me to you." God then said to Moses, "You will say to the Israelites: 'YAHWEH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, has sent me.' That will be my name forever, and by this name they shall call upon me for all generations to come."

2nd Reading: **1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12**

A warning to all

Let me remind you, brothers and sisters, about our ancestors. All of them were under the cloud and all crossed the sea. All underwent the baptism of the land and of the sea to join Moses and all of them ate from the same spiritual manna and all of them drank from the same spiritual drink. For you know that they drank from a spiritual rock following them, and the rock was Christ. However, most of them did not please God, and the desert was strewn with their bodies.

All of this happened as an example for us, so that we might not become people of evil desires, as they did. Nor grumble as some of them did and were cut down by the destroying angel.

These things happened to them as an example, and they were written as a warning for us, as the last times come upon us. Therefore, if you think you stand, beware, lest you fall.

Gospel: **Luke 13:1-9**

The barren fig tree

One day some persons told Jesus what had occurred in the Temple: Pilate had Galileans killed and their blood mingled with the blood of their sacrifices. Jesus replied, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this? I tell you: no. But unless you change your ways, you will all perish as they did.

"And those eighteen persons in Siloah who were crushed when the tower fell, do you think they were more guilty than all the others in Jerusalem? I tell you: no. But unless you change your ways, you will all perish as they did."

And Jesus continued with this story, "A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard and he came looking for fruit on it, but found none. Then he said to the gardener: 'Look here, for three years now I have been looking for figs on this tree and I have found none. Cut it down, why should it use up the ground?' The gardener replied: 'Leave it one more year, so that I may dig around it and add some fertilizer; and perhaps it will bear fruit from now on. But if it doesn't, you can cut it down."

Commentary

Moses, the shepherd tending the flock, is accosted by the burning bush and the voice of God. He hears of God's compassion and concern for his broken and afflicted people. God has come to rescue them—and he is sending Moses to them. Moses wants to know God's name. He is told, "I AM... This is my name forever." A strange name but this is the God of life, creation, history, promise, and calling; the God of faithful Word and presence with the people. They will learn.

We have known this God who gave manna and water and we know the God who has given us Jesus, bread and wine, eucharist, baptism, confirmation, and the Word in Scripture and the Word made flesh among us. Yet, do we know God, or like those who went before us, do we need to be questioned, "Is God pleased with us?" Jesus is telling us that if we don't repent NOW the day will come when it will be too late. Do we produce fruit (justice, virtue, faithfulness, forgiveness, etc.) or is there nothing to show in our lives again this year? One more chance: manure us, chop at our roots and hope. If not, cut the tree down so that it doesn't negatively affect everything around it. Choose!

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No. 1 rating takes toll on Kiko's Frankie

From page A1

He said the youngest "casualty" was six-year-old Frankie, who at first could not understand why he was often not around. (The child was only four months old when her father first ran for senator in 2001.)

"This is what breaks my heart," the reelectionist senator told INQUIRER editors and reporters over dinner on Wednesday last week. "Ten days ago, Frankie was suddenly being difficult. She did not obey her *yaya*, or her mom. So I said, 'There's something wrong here.'"

He sat down with Frankie to find out exactly what was bothering her. He soon realized that it was his absence that was causing his daughter much pain.

"I said, 'Frankie, when you wake up in the morning, sometimes your heart is hurting. Is it because Daddy's not here?' She cried," Pangilinan recalled.

"She said she thought the campaign is forever. She was hurting inside and she really thought her life had changed, that she's not going to see me. I told her that this is not forever, that this is going to be over by the summer," he said.

Tracking him down

Pangilinan said he asked his sister, Dr. Donna Pangilinan-Simpao, to help Frankie.

The doctor brought Frankie a big Philippine map to enable the child to track her father down in his campaign sorties.

"I told her, 'Yesterday, I was here. Tomorrow, I'll be in Davao, there.' So she is now involved. She is now participating in the campaign in that sense. She's no longer left out. Now she's okay," Pangilinan said.

He said the last time he checked with Frankie's teacher, the child was doing well in school.

To get Frankie involved in the campaign, Pangilinan let her appear in a 15-second TV ad endorsing his candidacy. His wife, singer-actress Sharon Cuneta, has also done TV campaign commercials for him.

TIME TO KISS THE BABIES: Senator Kiko grapples with a good-sized kid in his sortie at Siniloan, Pampanga. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

But as much as possible, Pangilinan does not want Frankie to join his campaign sorties.

"She does not go with me. We want a normal life for her. If we take her to the sorties, the public will take pictures. The poor child. We also have to shield her from all that," he said.

No scene-stealing

Pangilinan, who has four sisters and four brothers, said he was fortunate to have celebrities in his family to help in his campaign.

His brother Anthony, a former television broadcaster, is married to actress Maricel Laxa; his sister Angeli is married to singer Gary Valenciano.

"We bring something into the relationship. *Walang patalbugan, walang sikat* (No one-upmanship, no scene-stealing)," Pangilinan said.

"My father was hard on us in terms of leadership. We're taught to be in competition with ourselves," he said.

PROTECTIVE DAD covers the ears of Miel whenever the noise level rose during the Liberal Party (Drilon wing) proclamation rally last month of its candidates at the Club Filipino, Greenhills, San Juan. RAFFY LERMA

Eco groups back La Mesa dam reservation

By TJ Burgonio

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS ARE BACKing a proposal to declare the sprawling La Mesa dam area a watershed reservation to stop the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) from turning the site into a housing project for its employees and executives.

Bantay Kalikasan of the ABS-CBN Foundation and other groups backed the proposal in a public hearing organized by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources last week at the Bureau of Soils and Water Management office in Quezon City.

"La Mesa has bloomed because the public got involved," Gina Lopez, chair of Bantay Kalikasan, said in the open forum. Her group is involved in reforesting the 2,700-ha watershed that straddles Quezon and Caloocan cities, San Jose in Bulacan, and Montalban in Rizal.

Other environmental groups also stood up to voice support for the protection of the watershed, among them Centennial Force Foundation Inc. and the church-based National Social Action Council and Water.

Earlier, the DENR has said the watershed was already a protected area but it turned out such was not the case.

The La Mesa watershed includes a 179-ha reservoir that sends water coming from the Umiray, Angat and Ipo dams in Central Luzon to Metro Manila households.

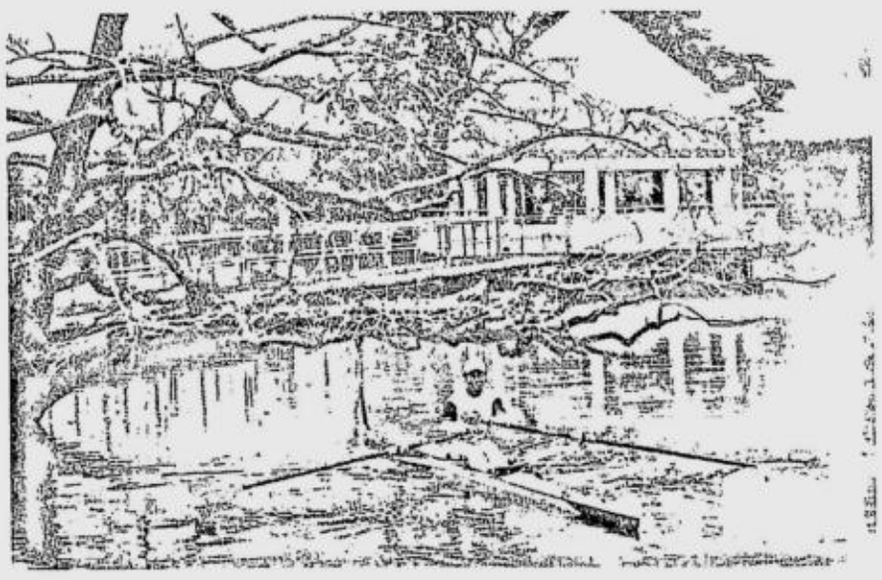
A controversy was stirred up last year over reports of ongoing construction of a housing project close to the La Mesa treatment plant. Another proposed 58-ha subdivision targets the upper portion of the reservoir. In another portion, an eco-park is being developed by a private foundation.

The Save the La Mesa Dam coalition, which includes Bantay Kalikasan, raised a howl over the housing project because of the threat it posed to the watershed.

A 2006 study by the Marine Environment and Resources Foundation Inc. of the University of the Philippines warned the La Mesa watershed was a "critical and vulnerable resource" and that current human activities there are putting at risk its water quality and quantity.

The housing in the area for 1,411 employees was part of a 1968 collective bargaining agreement between the former National Waterworks and Sewerage Administration (Nawasa) and its two unions. The agreement, which granted the employees rights to the land, was declared valid by the Supreme Court.

Aside from employee housing, the group discovered that some 120 houses were being built for MWSS executives in a three-ha area on the other side of the lake.



A CANOE slices through the serene waters of La Mesa Dam. For the past years, various environmental groups have voiced out their support for the protection of the watershed.
INQUIRER PHOTO

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Ampalaya as drug seen to boost tillers' income

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE FUTURE OF agriculture is bitter melon.

The Department of Health's recognition of *ampalaya* (bitter melon)—at least its leaves—as an "adjunct" medicine for diabetes mellitus, will boost the country's array of herbal medicinal plants in the local and international market, according to Lito Abelarde, chair of the Chamber of Herbal Industries of the Philippines.

"We have the support of the DOH now so our market will grow, creating more jobs and opportunities for small-scale farmers," Abelarde said last week in a forum in Quezon City.

It would also help the government cut back on the importation of expensive medicines, thus, lowering the cost of health care in the country, he added.

Before former Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit reclassified *ampalaya* as "folkloric" in 2003, *ampalaya*-based food supplements sold well in the local market, registering a 20-percent share in the total P2.45 billion income from sales of medicines, including synthetic ones.

At least 15 small businesses in the country thrived on the sale of *ampalaya* herbal products, exporting some of their products to Europe, Japan, Mexico, Korea, the Middle East, Canada and the United States.

Only five of them survived following the removal of the *ampalaya* from the list of 10 recognized medicinal plants, called "Sampung Halamang Gamot," drafted in 1995.

"Many diabetics were discouraged from taking *ampalaya*-based food supplements. Businesses slowly closed down. Many jobs were lost. Thousands of farmers were badly affected," Abelarde said.

But the country's agricultural sector may start looking up with the DOH's validation of *ampalaya*, he said.

According to a World Health Organization study in 2000, 171 million people across the world were diagnosed with diabetes. The Philippines alone registered 5 to 6 million cases.

By year 2030, the WHO pegs the number at 366 million worldwide—a figure that could translate into more income and economic activity, improving the country's fledgling herbal industry, Abelarde said.

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Give Satur a few days, he will yield, says lawyer

By TJ Burgonio and Nikko Dizon

REP. SATUR OCAMPO'S LAWYER Romeo Capulong yesterday appealed to the police to give his client a few days to come out and yield to the judicial authorities.

Capulong also said the filing of murder charges against Ocampo was part of government conspiracy to silence leftists engaged in a peaceful struggle.

"The police should give him until Monday or Tuesday to come out. They shouldn't waste their time," Capulong said in an interview.

"Satur Ocampo, as he promised, will voluntarily submit himself to the jurisdiction of the court, and he will initiate a process to clear his name and vindicate himself."

Clean hands

Capulong added: "By that time, we hope that we'll be able to file the petition for certiorari and prohibition with the Supreme Court questioning the issuance of the arrest warrant."

Capulong said that Ocampo would surface once he had prepared all the documents he needed for his defense in the multiple murder case filed against him in connection with the discovery of a mass grave of supposedly executed former rebels in Leyte.

"He will be going to court with clean hands," he said.

Talking with reporters on Friday, Capulong said the filing of the case was "a grand conspiracy, a grand scheme by the Arroyo government to neutralize the Left, particularly those engaged in peaceful parliamentary struggle."

He said the government had consciously avoided the "outright liquidation or abduction of the popular personalities engaged in peaceful parliamentary struggle" because "it would be bad for (its) image."

Warning to coddlers

"That's why they are on a legal offensive using the entire machinery of the government," Capulong said.

Philippine National Police chief Director General Oscar Calderon has warned that people coddling Ocampo will face charges in court.

Calderon ordered police nationwide to be furnished with copies of arrest orders against Ocampo and the others.

Process observed

Quezon City Police District Director Magtangol Gatdula said his men did not participate in yesterday's raid on Ocampo's house but were provided a copy of the warrant of arrest.

"All police stations were activated and had been provided copies of the arrest warrant," Gatdula said in a phone interview.

Director Geary Barias of the PNP directorate for intelligence, said the evidence against Ocampo had been heard by a fiscal and the militant leader was properly represented by a lawyer.

"There was a process and the judge saw something and issued a warrant," Barias said. *With a report from Nancy Carvajal*

Police raid Satur home

From page A1

themselves as 'Rambo,'" she quipped in an interview with the INQUIRER, referring to the raiders from the Philippine National Police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

She also said the policemen, mostly in plainclothes and led by a certain "Col. Hidalgo," pulled her cook, Juliet, to a corner when she tried to ask what their purpose was.

Malay also said she was shown a photocopy of the warrant of arrest which wrongly had the Ocampos' address at "Commonwealth Avenue."

CIDG chief Dir. Edgardo Doromal said his men, led by Supt. Jose Hidalgo, deputy of the Detection and Special Operations Division, were not conducting a raid.

"My men were there to serve a warrant for Ocampo's arrest. But it wasn't served because he wasn't there," Doromal said. He added that they would continue to search for Ocampo.

The raid lasted about 45 minutes. Malay said she stayed close to the policemen as they inspected the house.

"I told them my husband wasn't here. They told me they were just doing their job and that they didn't want to do this," said Malay, a retired journalism professor at the University of the Philippines.

Ocampo has denied involvement in the killings in the 1980s of communist rebels suspected of being military spies, saying he was in military detention under dictator Ferdinand Marcos when the alleged killings took place in Leyte.

A Leyte judge issued the arrest warrants for Ocampo, Communist Party of the Philippines founding chair Jose Maria Sison and 50 other suspected leftist leaders and guerrillas.

Construction workers working on the Malay house that burned down last December told the INQUIRER the raiders knocked on the gate at around 10:45 a.m.

Strangers not welcome

"They called out to us to open the gate. But we said we had no authority and we have instructions not to do that for strangers," said a worker, who refused to give his name. "That was when some of them started climbing the gate. One of them opened the gate for the others."

After gaining entry, angry policemen berated and threatened the workers for not opening the gate.

"One of them said, 'You knew we are policemen. Why didn't you open the gate? We can charge you for that,'" another worker said nervously.

The policemen also entered the houses beside the Ocampos'.

A tenant of one of the houses said around four policemen entered their unit and searched their rooms, alarming some of the tenants.

"They entered and said they were searching our rooms. They should be charged with trespassing," one worried tenant said.

Disguised as joggers

The construction workers and Ocampo's neighbors said they noticed a suspicious car parked on their street a few hours before the raid started.

For the past weeks, they said they had also noticed suspicious men on motorcycles circling their area. Other men tried to look like they were joggers or *puto* (rice cake) vendors, they said.

"They have been watching this street for a long time. They should have known they would never find Kuya Satur there," a neighbor said.

Wrong address

Malay sounded angry.

"I know that we are experiencing what other Filipinos are experiencing everyday in the rural areas and the slums," she said. "Our rights are not being protected and we are being punished for speaking up against abuse of power."

UNDER THE BED, TOO: Ocampo's wife, Bobbie Malay, shows how 15 CIDG agents in plainclothes searched the couple's bedroom. JOAN BONDOC

Malay said her husband was not in hiding but "just biding his time" and would surface once he was ready.

"We were surprised because they came in fast," Nathanael Santiago, Bayan Muna secretary general, said in a phone interview. Santiago was visiting Malay in her house when the raid occurred.

"We rushed out to meet them. They showed us a photocopy of the warrant. Bobbie pointed out that the warrant had the wrong address, and refused to let them in. But they insisted, so she eventually let them in," Santiago recounted.

Communist purge

"They searched the house, looked inside cabinets and under the beds. They also searched the two other houses, but they failed to find him there."

The multiple murder charges case against Ocampo stemmed from his alleged involvement in the "execution" of at least 15 suspected military spies as part of a "purge" within the communist movement.

On Thursday, Ocampo held a clandestine news conference, where he said he would eventually turn himself in. "I do not feel compelled to go underground because I am prepared politically and legally to face this case," he said.

Detained, tortured

Ocampo, president of the Bayan Muna party, said the charges were to prevent him from campaigning for the May elections, and to harass small left-wing parties seeking seats in Congress.

This was not the first time the 67-year-old Ocampo had gone into hiding. In 1964, he became a founding member of the militant student-youth organization Kabataang Makabayan while pounding the business beat as a journalist.

He went underground when Marcos declared martial law in 1972. In 1976, he was arrested, tortured and detained for the next nine years.

In 1985 after obtaining a pass to vote at the National Press Club annual elections, he eluded the soldiers guarding him and rejoined the revolutionary movement.

After the dictatorship fell in 1986, Ocampo headed the National Democratic Front negotiating panel during peace talks with the Aquino government.

Ocampo returned to the underground in 1987 after the Mendiola Massacre where 18 farmers died. In 1989, he was rearrested with Malay and freed in 1992 without having been found guilty of any crime. *With reports from TJ Burgonio and Nikko Dizon, AP*

Art heals 'Reming' children in Bicol: To imagine is to hope

From page A1

goren have been touring the country to conduct module-based sessions showing how art can be used to "heal" broken spirits and "re-empower" the sapped will.

They make up the core group behind a project dubbed "Trauma Interrupted," which is basically an application of psycho-social therapy through visual art workshops. Participants are urged to draw on paper before making a "textile version" by cutting and sewing together multicolored pieces of scrap fabric *(retazos)* based on their drawings.

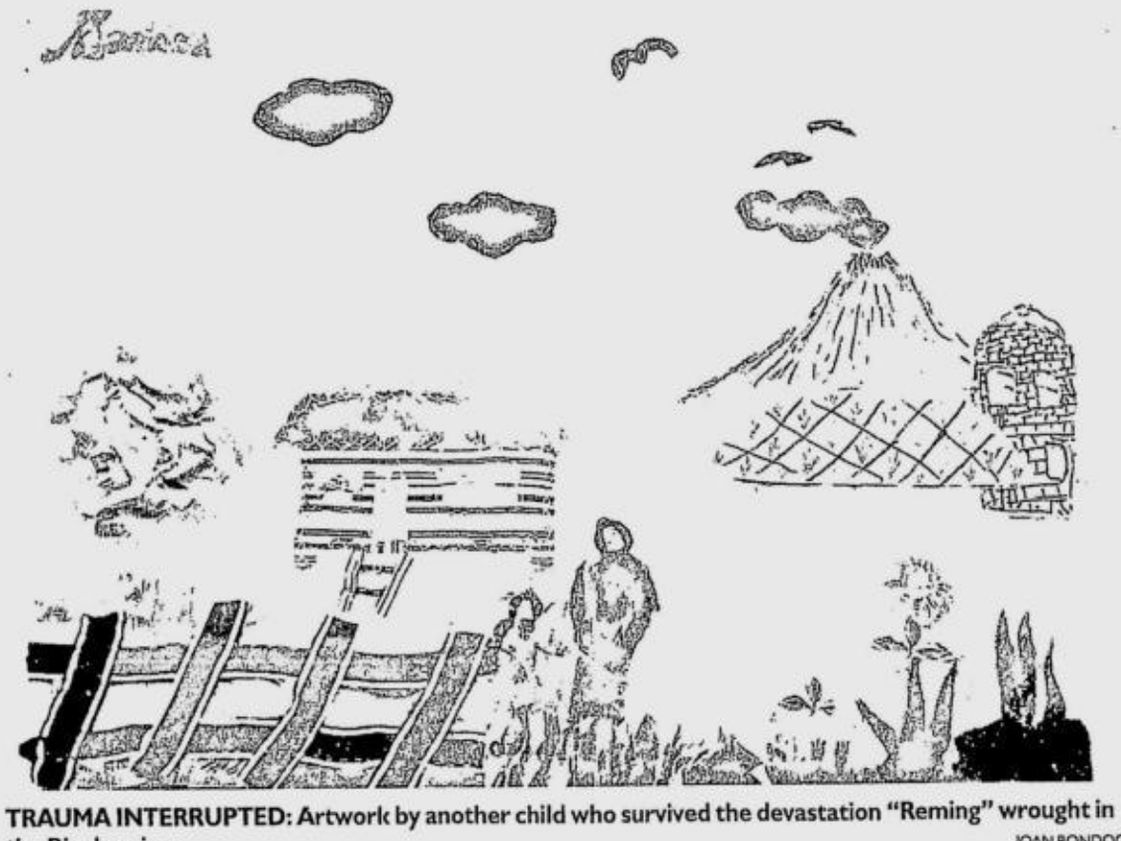
By November, Quinto and the artist-collaborators are expected to have sewn those hundreds of pieces together into a quilt big enough to form what the group called the "House of Comfort"—a tent-like, interactive sculpture that would tour the country for installation back in the places where the workshops were held.

Said Quinto of her envisioned opus: "It will be a dream house showing how people rebuild their lives through their stories, dreams and art."

Credentials

A published critic, journal editor, and art studies professor at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, Datuin has done research on Asian women artists as a fellow of the Asian Public Intellectuals program of the Nippon Foundation.

Quinto has been conducting similar workshops for 11 years as a volunteer at CRIBS (Create Responsive Infants by Sharing), a nongovernment organization based in Marikina City, which runs a shelter program for young survivors of incest and rape.



TRAUMA INTERRUPTED: Artwork by another child who survived the devastation "Reming" wrought in the Bicol region. JOAN BONDOC

Liongoren owns the Liongoren Gallery on New York Street in Cubao, Quezon City, which last year began exhibiting all the handcrafted textile artworks produced in the workshops.

The INQUIRER met with the three women days after they conducted their latest workshop in Albay for around 30 persons, including Basas, left homeless by Reming. Most of the participants were men.

"Relief is, of course, their most immediate concern, and healing the soul is not actually the priority. But art is a powerful intervention [to achieve the latter], a process for the survivors to affirm that they can create again, that they can rebuild," Datuin said.

"We try to complement the other forms of assistance being received by the victims. Whatever potential we can unlock through art can be channeled to other aspects of their recovery. We have seen people who were shy at the beginning of our sessions but, toward the end, became more participatory and regained a sense of community," she said.

Cathartic language

In the Albay workshop, as in others earlier held in other provinces, survivors of life-scarring experiences are encouraged to open up and unload, not necessarily through words but through a more personal, if not more cathartic, language of line, shape, color, and texture.

"Trauma Interrupted" has been conducted in the provinces of Leyte and Bohol and the cities of Dumaguete and Iligan, where sessions were held for survivors of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

The project has also reached out to orphans and street children in Bulacan, sex workers in Cebu, and differently abled children in Naga. In Manila, it has gathered children of Filipino women entertainers in Japan abandoned by their Japanese partners.

Liongoren acknowledged that the sessions, whether attended by adults or children, could be emotional and "very revealing, as though a dam were being opened."

For starters, the participants are asked to do "simple doodles (lines, curves, circles, whirls, grids, etc.)" and to "explain" their work. "They themselves assign symbolism to what they drew: For some women, a whirl can mean 'confusion,' while grids can mean 'how I divide my life,'" Liongoren said.

Visual autobiography

Except in Albay where survivors were encouraged to draw "what happened" during the typhoon's rampage (like what Basas did), workshop participants are not told to recall their ordeals, Quinto said.

"Otherwise," she said, "a 'second victimization' will occur, especially for those who survived abuse." In those very sensitive cases, participants are told to "express themselves" through abstract art or doodles, and then move on to drawing pictures that best represent their dreams.

Quinto noted that for some reason, a number of rape victims or prostituted women in the workshops chose to use rulers in their work.

The artist pondered: Does this reflect a yearning for "cleanliness" or for things to be "anchored" in their lives?

When it came to visualizing dreams, Liongoren recalled, most of the Albay evacuees expectedly drew the most precious possession they had just lost—a home.

Datuin referred to the exercise as "creative visual autobiography."

As far as she can remember, it was only at the turn of the millennium that art was seriously considered as a tool for community rehabilitation in the Philippines. (Filipino artists have always lent a hand in fund-raising activities for disaster victims, for example, but that's an entirely different approach.)

Imagination as hope

According to Datuin, what her group is doing today in "Trauma Interrupted" was unheard of in the 1990s, when the country reeled from a series of mass tragedies like the great Luzon earthquake, the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo, and the Ormoc flashfloods.

But the principle by which Datuin, Quinto and Liongoren pursue their mission is hardly new. And making it work for a boy like Francis Basas—who drew the tree that saved his life as his village sank in the mud—hardly requires the expressionist genius of a Van Gogh.

As Quinto put it, "when you begin to imagine again, that is also when you begin to hope."

The workshops that will lead to the building of a "House of Comfort" are being supported by the Japan Foundation Manila, National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Global Women's Fund, CRIBS-Philippines, and Kasibulan, an organization of women artists.

One stroke, everything changes, beauty emerges

From page A1

and support of relatives, friends and colleagues—"the whole nation"—helped Noel go a long way. Perhaps not in the words and sports departments but in the realm of colors, form and beauty that has remained vivid in Noel's mind. These elements have evolved, deepened and brightened through the years.

Former health secretary and neurologist Alfredo Bengzon, Noel's colleague in former president Corazon Aquino's cabinet, said: "We have barely scratched the surface when it comes to how the brain works." And he went on to describe how their little group of like-minded citizens that included Noel worked together in the 1980s after Ninoy Aquino's assassination and the passion that possessed them. "We were driven by one obsession and that was to contribute our bit."

Another battlefield

Noel was the "quintessential documentor," Bengzon said. They belonged to what was called "the convenor group" that drew anti-Marcos personalities from different camps and political persuasions. "If Noel could only reveal the whole story," Bengzon sighed.

More than 20 years have passed since those fevered times but, alas, this woebegone nation is still in search of another springtime. Noel has since moved on to another battlefield.

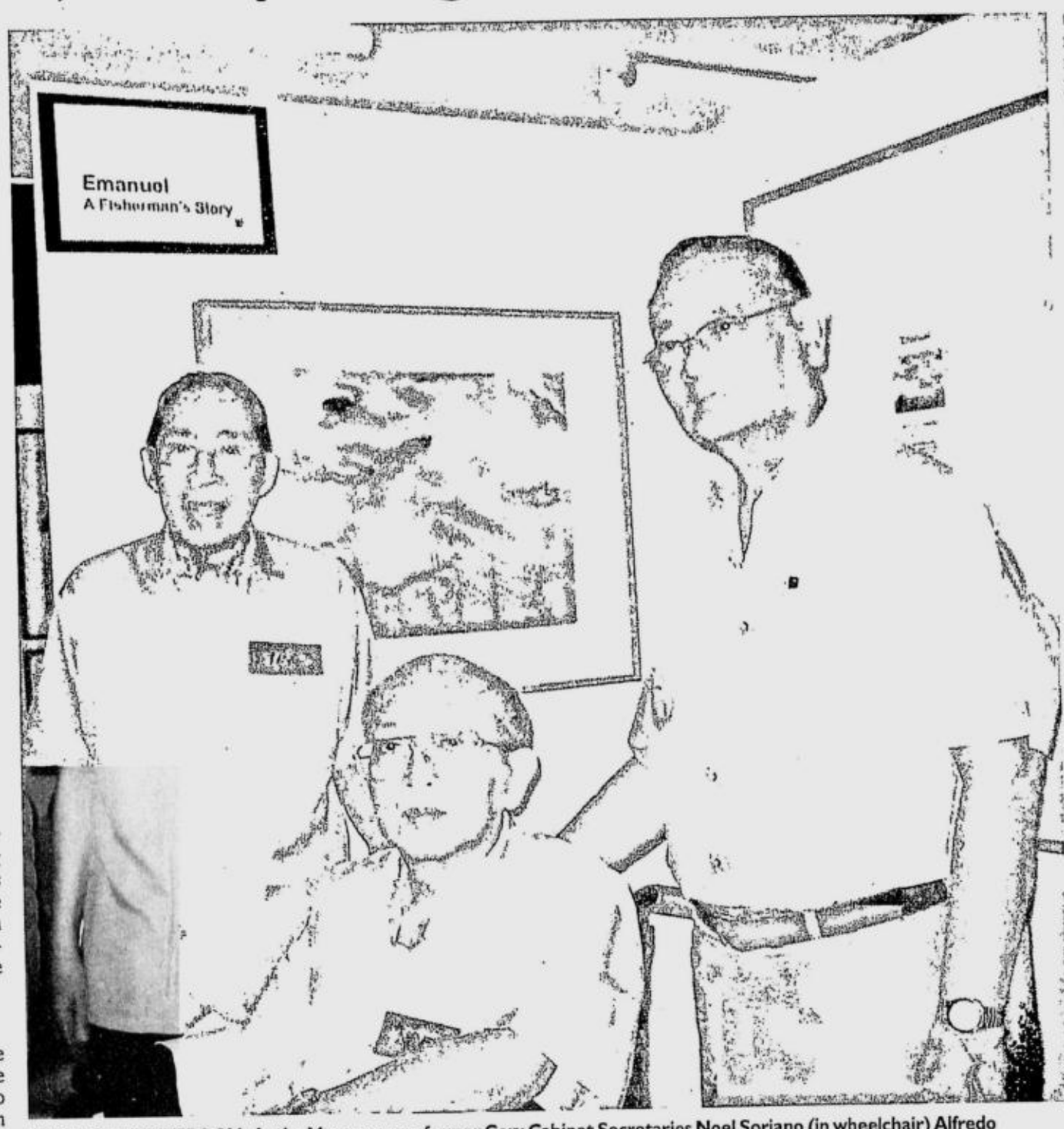
Present at Noel's exhibit were former colleagues in the Cory cabinet including former President Fidel Ramos who, in his brief speech, described the similar state of his daughter, Chula, who was a victim of a road accident. Members of the Aphasia Foundation of the Philippines were there too, to lend support.

Expressive Aphasia

Noel's condition is called expressive aphasia or the loss of the power to use words due to a brain lesion. Noel is also paralyzed in his right extremities. With help, Noel can walk short distances. He can sing some tunes, "Happy Birthday" among them, utter some words, like "One!" with his pointer raised, which could mean many things.

All his watercolor paintings bear his familiar signature, E.V. Soriano, and the date they were done. No, this UP and Harvard graduate has not been reduced to a small uncommunicative heap. Noel is saying many things in his small "silent" way. There is something so profound in all this that is hard to miss.

Noel's daughter Rinna grouped Noel's 70 watercolors (framed by noted frame maker Johnny Soriano) into themes: Soul Vision, Noel's Garden, Concrete Foundations, Landscapes and UP Chapel.



FREEDOM FIGHTERS ALL: In the Marcos years, former Cory Cabinet Secretaries Noel Soriano (in wheelchair) Alfredo Bengzon (right) and Vicente Jayme were "driven" by an obsession to contribute to nation building. CERES DOYO

Noel attends the noontime Mass at the UP chapel every day almost without fail. Thus, his attachment to the place and his watercolor renderings of the spaceship like chapel by architect and National Artist Leandro Locsin. On Sundays he and Angge go to Fr. Ruben Villote's Mass at the Center for Migrant Youth in Quezon City. Noel has made a sizeable number of "Mass-mates" who turned up at the exhibit.

Art therapy

Rinna, an educator, recalled how her father got into the medium. "I came across the work of scientist and educator Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) that offered a whole new world of innovative, holistic and creative approaches to health and education and the essence of being human in this world. My niece Francesca was a student at the Rudolf Steiner Waldorf School. Her teacher, Mary Joan Fajardo, said that art therapist Maria Abulencia could help out."

Abulencia has been Noel's art therapist for many years and through three exhibits. "We use wet on wet," said Abulencia who admitted that she got into this type of therapy through daring. She and Rinna have been surpervising Noel's therapy.

"We hesitate to call ourselves art therapists," Rinna explained, "because we do not have the training that others have undergone. But we take courage in the thought that the simple presence of another human being for another to facilitate a creative experience with colors brings forth tremendous healing not only for the patient but also for the circle of family and friends who care for that person."

Not in control

Rinna said that watercolor could be an intimidating medium but not for her father. "He knows he is not in full control of everything. He is not afraid to make mistakes because one cannot make a mistake when one truly paints."

Rinna wrote about healing through the arts in UP's "Arts Quarterly."

"The kind of artistic activity that my father is doing now is different from what I think he had in mind before he had his stroke. Steiner differentiated painting from drawing. In drawing, you have an image in mind and you just transfer that on paper or canvass. In painting, you allow the colors or light and darkness to create images and the painter only helps the images come out more clearly as they gradually emerge from the mixing of colors."

Noel and Angge live peacefully in a rented apartment on Times St. in Quezon City, a few houses away from former Ms Aquino's. UP is close enough for Noel's daily pilgrimage to his old haunt.

He reports to the administration his encounters with unsightly garbage or a roof that needs to be changed. He loves UP. That is where he and Angge met during their UP Student Catholic Action (UPSCA) days and where he rose to become the youngest UP president.

Fisherman's story

Why is Noel's story "A Fisherman's Story"? The parable-like notes by Rinna on her father's art works explain that Noel responded to Christ's call, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."

It was not like him to stay close to the shore, Rinna said, but to go deeper and deeper into the sea of humanity, get involved in people's lives, care for fellow human beings. He had his fishing net, he had his fishing line. He reached out, he cared.

After his government stint as National Security Adviser (that was when he also went full steam into digging and finding for the government the so-called hidden treasures buried in many sites all over the country), Noel went full-time into management education and NGO work.

"One evening," Rinna narrated, "Noel cast his net to the other side of his boat. It was the biggest catch ever for him. In awe, he could not move a limb, he could not speak a word. But he could laugh and he could sing! He shed tears. He was caught in the net of God's unconditional love..."

If Noel could only tell the whole story, Bengzon said. The story of daring fishers in a turbulent sea. It is a story for the present time.

(Dr. Emanuel "Noel" Soriano's paintings are also available at www.estore-exchange.com.)

Pinoys bad at lying, talking sex to kids, says UP study

From page A1

These were just some of the conclusions drawn from the survey on how well Filipinos communicate, conducted by the Communication Research department of the UP College of Mass Communication.

The survey, "*Kompetent Siya*," (He's competent) said that as sources of communication, Filipinos were least competent when it came to telling a lie to a friend, classmate or co-worker, teacher/boss, family member or a person in authority, such as a priest, lawyer or a doctor.

Apology

On the other hand, Filipinos were adept at complimenting a family member or a friend, giving advice to a friend about a personal problem and apologizing to a family member.

When playing the role of a receiver, Filipinos saw themselves as least competent in accepting criticism from a classmate or a co-worker. Neither did they take kindly to accepting a friend's rejection of a favor and a rejection of an invitation to a romantic date. They were not comfortable declining someone's invitation to a date and turning down a friend's request for a favor.

On the other hand, they were good at accepting an apology from a family member or a friend, receiving advice on a personal problem from a professional and receiving a compliment from a family member.

"Overall trends indicate that the respondents see themselves as relatively more competent in agreeable situations that involve their family and friends. On the other hand, they consider themselves as less competent in discordant situations, regardless of who they are communicating with," the survey said.

The survey was conducted in January, through face-to-face interviews of 1,076 randomly selected Metro Manila residents.

Three out of five respondents were women. Majority of the respondents went to college and close to half reported a monthly household income of below P20,000, putting half the sample below at the lower-income category.

Uneasy with sex

Dr. Fernando Paragas, chair of the Communication Research department of UP-CMC, told the INQUIRER that the results could represent the views of the entire country since Metro Manila has a migrant population.

In a parent-child communication set-up, the survey showed that Filipinos were least competent in discussing sex/sexuality with their children. Neither were the respondents comfortable discussing other family members' personal problems, smoking, drugs, alcohol and relationships between boys and girls.

On the other hand, they perceived themselves to be good at discussing their children's plans and dreams, school work and even money.

"It can be inferred that on the whole, when the content of communication is positive, the respondents are more likely to rate themselves as more competent; [and] when the content is negative, as less competent," the survey said.

Good of giving advice

When talking to their superiors, the respondents viewed themselves as not good at telling a lie to their teacher, boss and other person in authority, but good at receiving advice when it came to a personal problem.

When it came to their peers, they were not good at accepting apologies, breaking bad news, giving criticisms and making complaints. On the other hand, they were good at giving compliments, apologizing and giving advice on personal problems.

"It is clear that perceived communication competence is closely linked with 'comfortableness.' As the informants had disclosed, when they feel comfortable with the person they are talking to, they feel less conscious about what they say and how they say it," the survey said.

Paragas noted that men and women showed the same levels of competency, although women were significantly better at family communication compared with men.

This could be linked to the woman's traditional nurturing role in the family, he said.

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Small-fry justice

FIRST, THE GOOD NEWS. THREE FORMER PUBLIC officials have been found guilty of graft and falsification of documents and now face as much as 20 years in jail. Now, the bad news: The officials involved—the former mayor, the former vice mayor and the former municipal treasurer of Anahawan town in Southern Leyte—are decidedly out of power, out of favor, out of the loop.

The amount involved: P16,767, the cost of some 3,000 pieces of coco lumber.

EDITORIAL

Contrast this case with, well, take your pick: a deposed president's unprecedented plunder case; a fugitive agriculture executive's unexplained role in a hundred-million-peso scam; a government agency's billion-peso anomalous contract, condemned by the Supreme Court but excused by the Ombudsman; and so on, ad nauseam.

There is no excuse for what the Anahawan officials did, as established by the Sandiganbayan's fourth division. In 1998, the former officials, when they were still in office, conspired to award the contract for the purchase of coco lumber to the company owned by the mayor's son, by making it appear that two other companies had taken part in the bidding. "Their disrespect for the proper procedure in the accomplishment of their public duties should not be tolerated," the Sandiganbayan said in its decision.

One cannot help, however, but suspect the real reason the Anahawan case prospered. The ex-officials involved were small fry. Unlike big fish former President Joseph Estrada, former Agriculture Undersecretary Joc-Joc Bolante, or incumbent Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos, they did not have deep pockets, wily lawyers, powerful backers or (in the case of Abalos and those Comelec commissioners who approved the anomalous Mega Pacific contract) the support of an Ombudsman with neither courage nor conviction.

On the same day the story about the Southern Leyte officials saw print, the latest news about former Occidental Mindoro Rep. Jose Villarosa, convicted for the murder of the Quintos brothers in 1997, broke. The solicitor general petitioned the Court of Appeals to acquit Villarosa, ostensibly because a pivotal confession has been found to be inadmissible.

The petition, filed on Dec. 4 last year but which came to light only last week, was signed by then Solicitor General and now Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Antonio Eduardo Nachura.

"What happened to Paul and Michael Quintos is detestable and should be condemned," the solicitor general's plea read. "But doubts abound on the complicity of the appellants in their deaths."

One cannot but suspect, however, that those supposed doubts have been amplified because ex-congressman and ex-governor Villarosa is still a powerful figure in his province, and his wife Amelita, a staunch ally of the President's, is an incumbent member of the House of Representatives.

The Quintos family finds this latest twist in the pursuit of justice even more disorienting than usual, because they have seen videotape footage of the now allegedly coerced confession, and they say there was no sign of coercion at all.

There is, of course, much more to this case, and the politics of Mindoro, than meets the eye. But the latest turnaround in the government's handling of the Quintos case (after it had successfully prosecuted the case over several years, ending with a conviction only a year ago) can only deepen public cynicism about the rule of law: not its theory but its uneven practice. Apparently, there is one kind of justice for the poor and uninfluential, and altogether another one for the rich, the well-counseled, the powerful.

Ambitious goals

THE NATO OFFENSIVE IN AFGHANISTAN HAS AMBITIOUS goals. Among these, preventing the previously announced Taliban moves, striking their militias, breaking their connection with drug dealers and opium producers and restoring electric power. But the troops deployed on the field are only 5,500 (including 1,000 Afghans) and the main role assigned to the negligent US aviation increases the risks of new civilian bloodshed.

FOREIGN COMMENT

If Nato does not obtain a definitive military victory (and that would be surprising) it will find itself involved in an identity crisis.

And Italy, with or without Romano Prodi's government, will be stuck between an impossible withdrawal and an impracticable peace mission.

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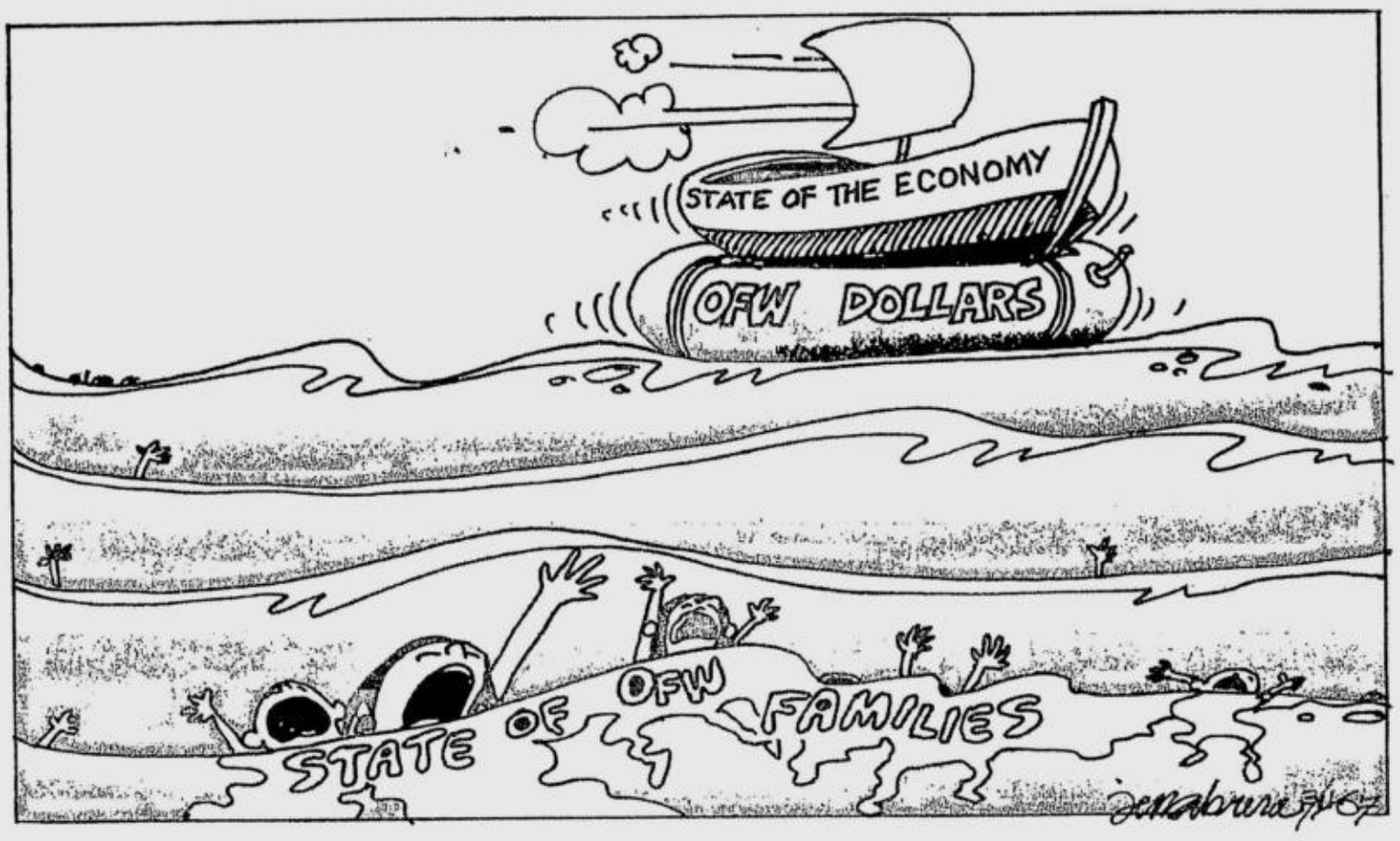

Break a leg!

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

BREAK A LEG! AND I MEAN THIS LITERALLY for those who would convert the political meeting into an amateur night.

The deterioration of the political meeting as one of the great institutions of Philippine democracy is cause for profound regret. It has become a vice of elections in this country and speaks ill of our voters in general. It particularly infects politicians who would beguile them with song-and-dance euphoria instead of inviting them to seriously consider the problems of the nation that deserve their primary attention.

The gravity of this problem was well-expressed by the INQUIRER with its headline of Feb. 13 that said: "Circus comes to town." Indeed, it is back again, for the jingles have been composed, the dance routines readied, the skits memorized and the acrobatics rehearsed. The stage has been set for the political meeting, so strike up the band!

The gawking audience has no interest in the corruption of the government or the faltering economy. They care nothing about our mammoth foreign debt, the complications of dual citizenship or the hidden designs of the absentee voting law. They are not alarmed by the widening militarization of the government, the aggravation of uncontrolled lawlessness, the arrogant durability of the pork barrel, and the neglect and incompetence of public education.

The Garci tapes have lost public curiosity and at best become only an angry memory. The fugitive Bolante is—who is he anyway? The embezzled P780 million fertilizer fund, the malodorous voting machines and the Macapagal highway scandal do not ignite public suspicion any more. It's not for these irrelevant matters they have come to attend the political meeting.

What then are they there for? It's to behold the entertainers!

It's to see the actors who are running—some of them again—for public office they would trivialize rather than dignify, unlike the past statesmen who have enriched the Senate with their vision and patriotism. It's not to hear the candidates expound on the gravity of the nation's difficulties and propose their solutions, if any. It's not to know how we can become once again one of the leading countries in the whole continent of Asia instead of remaining at the bottom of the list.

The purpose of most of the people coming to the political meeting is not civic but simply optic. It's to be awed by the personal appearance of Sharon Cuneta-Pangilinan and Vilma Santos-Recto and Lucy Torres-Gomez and Sunshine Cruz-Montano. Their husbands who are all running for the Senate and whose views (if any) the audience should seriously consider, are mere accessories like members of a supporting cast. It's the leading ladies the voters want to see!

In the absence of the stars, there is also the intermission that has been orchestrated at great expense for the amusement of the *bakya* crowd. You can expect the ASO jingle to be sung at the GO rallies and an also derogatory reply to be vulgarized soon in the TU meetings. One senatorial candidate has announced that he will be traveling in his campaign with a troupe of chorus girls to proclaim his qualifications—for libido?

But how about the issues of the day and the platforms (if any) of the contending political parties? As my prodigious 2-year-old granddaughter Bea would say with a tactfulness beyond her age, "That is a question I will not answer."

It was so different before, during the pre-martial law years, when great issues of the day were debated before the people, between Quezon and Sumulong on real democracy in 1941, Roxas and Recto on parity rights in 1947, and Laurel and Quirino on good government in 1949. In 1953, President Magsaysay posed the crucial question to his advisers: "Can we defend this at Plaza Miranda?" Plaza Miranda was then the vortex of political sentiment, including civic indignation, as expressed in the speeches delivered at that historic place.

The dignity and seriousness of the political meeting before are all gone. Now it is like a stage presentation with misplaced entertainers trying to be statesmen and succeeding only as comic relief. Quezon danced the tango but only in the ballroom and Osmeña might have sung but only in the bathroom. I think the change began when Ninoy Aquino and Doy Laurel sang "The Impossible Dream" and Tony Barredo monotoned his version of "Dahil sa Iyo." Now every candidate wants to prove he should be elected for singing off-key.

I hope we can restore the true meaning and purpose of the political meeting, which is to involve the people in the discussion of public issues and their resolution through the instrument of the ballot. The irresponsible members of the political audience should transfer their allegiance from the likes of Mother Lily and her colleagues in the entertainment business to our more deserving and beloved Inang Bayan.

Justice and mercy

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

THE STORY IS TOLD ABOUT A MAN WHO looked sad on his birthday. When asked by a friend, he said: "It's my brother. He forgot my birthday last year, and he forgot again this year."

"But that happens. Even brothers forget birthdays," the friend advised.

"Yes, but he's my twin brother, how could he forget?" the man sighed.

* * *

How long will God put up with us? In today's Gospel (Mk. 7, 1-13), Jesus calls us to repent: "But I tell you, if you don't repent, you will all perish as they did!" However, this stern warning is accompanied with utmost understanding in his parable of the fruitless fig tree, which is given a chance to live for another year. Not only is the fig tree given a lease on life; it also will be given all the help. The ground will continue to be cultivated, and fertilizer will be applied, so that it may bear fruit in the future. Yes, God is a God of Justice, but He is also a God of second, third, fourth and many chances.

* * *

According to a story, one day, justice and mercy met. What did they say to each other? Justice shouted "Just *tiis*"! And mercy whispered back to him "Just *tiis*." (Just be patient.) It is not easy, but many times in our lives we encounter moments when justice and mercy meet. Whenever such a meeting occurs, let us be guided by this principle: The minimum of mercy is justice, but beyond justice is mercy.

* * *

There used to stand outside my room a tall acacia tree. It was often the subject of conversation and admiration of many passersby because of its wide branches and lofty stature. But some years ago, a powerful typhoon felled this once proud tree to the ground. Along with its fall was the humbling revelation that this tree so tall had no deep roots after all. End of the story? Read on.

* * *

Someone in our community suggested that we cut up the branches for fuel and timber, but that we let the trunk be just for another year. So the unnecessary and useless branches were cut, and the trunk was allowed to occupy space. After some weeks, from the trunk came forth sprouts, and soon, the sprouts became branches filled with leaves.

The acacia tree is alive again. Not as proud and lofty as before, but stronger now because it is "grounded." Maybe not so much a subject of conversation and admiration of many passersby as before, but it is still alive, just because someone suggested that it be given another chance, another year. End of the story. The birth of new hope, fresh start and new beginnings.

* * *

Someone once said that people would remember us for the times we gave them a bit of our heart, and not so much the times when we gave them a piece of our mind. Yes, people will remember moments of kindness, gentleness and understanding. It is precisely these moments that make people change, grow and move on.

* * *

"By their fruits you will know them." Let this be our guiding principle when we choose our leaders, lest they will just occupy space and bear no fruit at all. Let us not elect leaders who only bear much fruit for themselves. Let us vote for leaders who are capable of bearing fruit and sharing their fruits with others.

* * *

It is sad, but good seeds hardly have the chance to grow up and bear fruit in our beloved land. Why? Because, here, bad weeds thrive and abound. Why? Because we do not cut them down! Let us cut down and remove all those weeds that just exhaust the soil, and let us make sure that new and more vicious weeds will not be planted. And by all means, let us plant good seeds, fertilize them, protect them, so that they will bear much fruit.

* * *

Why do bad weeds thrive and abound in our land? Because they are well fertilized with money, dirty money, like the almighty *jueteng* and drug money. How long will this go on? As long as people like you and me allow them. Let us not lose heart in our fight against evil. Let us continue to be vigilant and point to what is right. Let us put good people in government. Let us elect people with a mission for our nation, not people with personal ambition. Let us believe and keep on believing that truth, goodness and righteousness will triumph in the end.

* * *

Inviting you to "Called by Love, the Concert," with Fr. Raul Caga, SVD, Chin-Chin Gutierrez and the Arnoldus Company at St. Paul University Theatre, Quezon City, on March 17, 7 p.m. for the benefit of the scholarship and formation programs of the Divine Word Seminary Tagaytay. Tickets are available at Christ the King Mission Seminary (7265002); Sacred Heart Parish, Quezon City (9290419/9230685) and at the Seminary Store Foundation Inc. 7225684.

* * *

An invitation to a Lenten Retreat (Understanding and Healing Transgenerational Patterns Through Psychogenetics and Gestalt Therapy in the Light of the Gospel) on March 17-18, SVD Retreat House, Tagaytay; and on April 14-15, Cebu City. For more details please call Fr. Ed Fugoso, SVD, 09175414330 or (046) 4130340.

* * *

Let God be your pillar in these troubled times, text ON<space>PRAYER and send to 2948 for Globe/Sun and 3940 for Smart. God bless you. Mama Mary loves you!

* * *

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, may people experience true justice and mercy on me. Amen.

PPCRV: the Catholic Church in politics

WITH DUE RESPECT

Artemio V. Panganiban

SINCE MY FIRST COLUMN CAME OUT A month ago on Feb. 11, I have pursued one consistent theme: to enable our people to enjoy the full blessings of a prosperous, liberal democracy that adheres faithfully to the rule of law, we urgently need visionary leadership by example.

Crucial to the search for principled leaders are periodic elections. Unfortunately, our electoral exercises have been tainted with serious allegations of irregularities (*dagdag-bawas*, Hello Garci, massive vote-buying, terrorism and other forms of cheating).

Honest, orderly and peaceful elections. The Supreme Court is often referred to as the last bulwark of democracy; but the first bastion is honest, orderly and peaceful elections (HOPE). Like the judiciary, the Commission on Elections is constitutionally independent and granted with more than sufficient powers and functions to conduct credible elections.

Sadly, however, the present Comelec has been mired in various controversies that have placed into serious question its ability to fulfill its mandate. The forthcoming May elections are a new crucible for the Comelec to show its mettle and to rise above the mud.

In this heroic effort, the Comelec is luckily being assisted by its reinvigorated citizens' arm, the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), led by its vision-driven president, Ambassador Henrietta T. de Villa. The PPCRV is a national, parish-based, political but nonpartisan, lay organization actively supported by the Catholic hierarchy.

The PPCRV was organized in response to Resolution 28 of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II) which, in turn, was the Philippine "echo" of the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II). This Resolution asked Catholic lay leaders to "help form the civic conscience of the voting population" and "to promote the election to public office of leaders of true integrity."

During its three-day National Conference on March 9-11, to which I had been invited as keynote speaker, PPCRV animated its diocesan leaders with "Faith and Fire," so they could fulfill its missions of (1) voter education, and (2) poll watching.

Voter education. To make the electorate more aware of and knowledgeable on social and political issues, the PPCRV conducts year-round voter education in all parishes nationwide. It organized the Pinoy Voters Academy and crafted three modules derived from popular TV programs: (1) Pilipinas, Nag-Grow Ka Na Ba? (2) Kababayan, Laban o Bawi? and (3) Halalan Idol.

The first module analyzes the country's current political and economic situation. The second imparts the social teachings and political apostolate of the Church. The third explains the qualifications that voters should look for in candidates. Recently, the INQUIRER published the PPCRV's "Ten Commandments for Responsible Candidacy" and "Ten Commandments for Responsible Voting."

The PPCRV also holds a weekly radio program, "Boto Ko, Dangal Ko," every Sunday at 11 a.m. over Radio Veritas and the Catholic Media Network affiliates. And it has partnered with ABS-CBN in sponsoring senatorial debates in "Forum 2007" every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 6 p.m.

Poll watching. The PPCRV's best-known activity is poll watching. It is unleashing 620,000 poll watchers to monitor the 310,000 precincts all over the country. To recruit its huge army, it is tapping about 250 volunteers from each of the 2,700 parishes nationwide. Additionally, the PPCRV is fielding SWAT (Social Witnesses Attesting Truth) teams to oversee specific areas of concern, such as communications, logistics, documentation and roving patrols.

It plans to ask its volunteers to secure, after the counting of votes in each polling precinct, a Certificate of Votes (COVs) duly authenticated by the Board of Election Inspectors (BEI). They shall submit the COVs to the PPCRV Voters Assistance Desk (VAD) in every polling center.

The parish coordinators shall gather all the COVs from the VADs and forward them to the Arch/Diocesan Counting Centers for encoding, encryption and transmittal through its special Internet system to the PPCRV national office. The transmitted results shall then be consolidated and published in wide screens at the PPCRV National Operations Center and in its special, secure website (ppcrv.org), as well as in the media outlets of the Catholic Church.

"Hope" and "champ" of democracy. Consistent with its vision of CHAMP—clean, honest, accurate, meaningful and peaceful elections—the PPCRV will thus be in a position to validate the Comelec official count. Should this happen, the commission can then rise like a phoenix from its controversial past.

The PPCRV is asking our people to vote intelligently; to reject the traditional politics of "guns, goons and gold" and "payoff, personality and patronage"; and to elect individuals who embody the "glory, grace and gospel of God" and who exemplify "principles, programs and performance."

In 1992, Fidel V. Ramos won the presidency by capturing only 23 percent of the votes, with a mere 900,000 plurality over his closest rival. Our people accepted his victory, because the elections were validated by an independent and competent Comelec supported by a credible PPCRV.

Indeed, by helping the Comelec conduct clean elections, the PPCRV may yet be our democracy's hope and champ in searching for visionary and exemplary leaders.

* * *

Comments are welcome at chiefjusticepanganiban@hotmail.com

Spin, pimping and unequal pay

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT THE HEADLINES ON the celebration of International Women's Day last March 8 focused on the "shaming" of our woman President, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, at the rally organized by the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW).

Although, when I viewed the footage of that "embarrassing" episode later that evening, the President didn't look all that embarrassed or shamed. Or maybe she's just developed a thick skin along with greater acting skills to mask her feelings.

When I chatted briefly with NCRFW chair Myrna Yao the next day, she explained that the President had said she would not address the audience but then, perhaps enthused by the reception, decided to say a few words.

Later, a closed-door meeting was called, during which, the media surmised, the organizers would be "scolded" by the "embarrassed" President. But Yao had a different spin to the story. "It was a good thing she met with us," said the NCRFW chair, "because we then had the chance to brief her even more thoroughly about the GREAT Women project."

"GREAT Women" is an NCRFW project, with funding from CIDA, meant to set up a network of micro enterprises for women around the country. The March 8 rally was meant to launch the project, and the President had apparently believed that most of the women in the stadium that day were or would be beneficiaries of the micro-credit program. What she didn't realize, though, was that the great majority of the participants were government employees who were not among the target beneficiaries.

Spin or not, it's unfortunate that once again, women's issues have been sidelined in favor of more sensational topics like politics and personal pique.

* * *

STILL, the "shaming" of the President was not the only newsworthy event taking place to mark International Women's Day.

Three days after the President signed the antiterror bill into law (Human Security Act or HSA), women's groups led by workers and "prostitution victims-survivors" denounced it and the continuing Balikatan exercises as "grave acts of pimping by the Arroyo government of our country and women, for the US"

The women's rally had been dubbed "Bread and Roses," to commemorate the first observance of International Women's Day in 1917 when women workers, commemorating the young women who died in New York in the Triangle Shirt Factory fire and women in prostitution, marched for "bread and peace."

A statement on the rally, spearheaded by the Women's Committee of the Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL) as well as by the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women Asia Pacific (CATW-AP), said the marchers "carried roses, demanding the scrapping of the VFA, the HSA and calling for justice for all women victims of sexual violence. They also wore white shirts with slogans: Karapatan ng Kababaihan, Ipaglaban! (Fight for women's rights!). The images are no different from what Russian Alexandra Kollontai wrote in her account of the (first) Women's Day in 1917: 'The wives, daughters and mothers of soldiers, previously as downtrodden and oppressed as prostitutes, demanded an end to their humiliation and angrily denounced all the hungry suffering of the past.'"

* * *

MARLENE Sindayen, spokesperson of APL-Women, said that the HSA, which the groups derided as being "clearly patterned after its American version ... will trample upon civil liberties that people fought so hard to restore after the Marcos dictatorship. This government continues to welcome US troops through Balikatan exercises even as it has facilitated the transfer of custody to the US Embassy of serviceman Daniel Smith who was convicted of raping a Filipina. Our country and the Filipino women are being prostituted by our own government in exchange for continued patronage."

Jean Enriquez, executive director of CATW-AP, asserted that "prostitution and rape of Filipino women and children increased once again after the signing of the VFA in 1998." She cited statistics that showed that the number of women in prostitution at the time US military bases were in the country rose to at least 22,000 in Angeles and Olongapo, but dramatically fell to 143 when the bases were removed. But since 1999, she said, the number of women in prostitution had risen once more to roughly 8,000 in three years' time.

"Now, we are counting around 11,000 women in prostitution in just the two cities, and they keep getting younger women. We haven't even included those abused in Cebu, General Santos, Zamboanga and numerous other cities where the US troops now have access because of the VFA. Our member organizations have documented the recruitment of girls, allegedly for house help or waitressing, ending up as entertainers for the soldiers," Enriquez added.

* * *

MEANWHILE, in a letter sent by e-mail, American senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, who has announced her availability as Democratic contender for the presidency, says she has timed with "Women's History Month," as March is known in the United States, to reintroduce, with Rep. Rosa DeLauro, the "Paycheck Fairness Act" that "would take critical steps to help empower women to negotiate for equal pay, to create strong incentives for employers to obey the laws that are in place and to strengthen federal outreach and enforcement efforts."

I mention this because Clinton cited statistics that reflect a similar situation in the Philippines. Exactly 44 years after the "Equal Pay Act" was signed into law, said Clinton, "millions of American families lose out because equal pay is still not a reality," with women who work full-time making only 77 cents for every dollar made by a man. The situation is much the same in this country, with women doing even worse and earning even less.

Young people in an obsolete society

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

RUNNING FOR PUBLIC OFFICE IN OUR society has become so costly that elections are losing their relevance. Instead of serving as the means for tracking changes in the public pulse, injecting new blood and strengthening the legitimacy of government, our elections only perpetuate feudal hierarchies and promote political instability. The new forces of modernity are still too weak to challenge the old structures of patronage. The old is dying but its place is being taken not by modern leaders but by new *trapos*.

In various parts of the country, many traditional politicians are running unopposed after agreeing among themselves to amicably divide the territory they occupy. But in other places, where the stakes are high, no fair settlement is possible, and so the battle lines are drawn. Where this happens, what results is a free-for-all where the landed oligarchy must defend its privileges against the challenge mounted by the new rich who have made their pile from gambling, smuggling, drugs, labor recruitment, government contracts, high finance, and, of course, entertainment. This is money politics; it reserves no place for the merely bright or competent.

Only the faces of the players are different; the rules of the game remain unchanged. They are the rules of an unequal, highly stratified society, where wealth and power are wielded by the very few, and permanent want is the lot of the many. Where charity takes the place of social justice, and basic human rights are recognized only when they are sponsored by a patron. Where industry and talent count for nothing unless they are mediated by connections. Where power trumps the law, and loyalty, rather than justice, is the norm. A false moral consensus based on the obsolete unity of the powerful and the powerless reigns in such societies.

Yet the winds of change are coming from all directions and they are buffeting Philippine society. More than ever, Filipinos are traveling extensively as migrants in search of work. In the modern societies that host them, they come face to face with cultures of fairness, of accountability, and of responsible citizenship and governance. They work hard, and they learn to demand good value for the money they earn. More important, they begin to expect good value not only in the form of quality goods, but also in the form of reliable and quality public service. They become conscious of their entitlements as taxpayers and as citizens.

Modern communication has also linked today's young Filipinos to a world never imagined by the previous generation. This has afforded them access not only to new knowledge but to new worlds as well. The new communication technology, as epitomized by the Internet, has placed at their disposal new modes of expression they are just beginning to discover. All this may incline them initially to seek better lives away from their own country, independently of its unsteady growth rather than in conjunction with it. But this is to be expected in all societies undergoing a turbulent transition.

Faced with a new global environment, Philippine society is hobbled by old structures and is unable to convert the full potential of its young population into fresh energy. Many Filipinos cannot wait indefinitely and they are forced to leave. But their departure is mainly physical. From faraway, they continue to track developments in the homeland, usually with greater impatience than the compatriots they left behind. They are a force for change, even if, as overseas voters, they may not be organized enough to make a significant difference at this point.

It is to the young people in school that we must look for hope. Unlike their elders, they are not yet captives of the patron-client relationships that are at the center of our everyday life. They are not concerned with preserving privilege but with breaking its structure. If they are taught even the basics of democracy in school, everything they learn should cast doubt on the legitimacy of almost everything they see around them.

But, judging alone from the types of courses they choose (nursing being the most favored course today), we can see at once that their sights are also set on work abroad. They seem to have little time, if any, for the issues that preoccupy the country. In many university forums where I have spoken, I have asked how many in the audience are registered voters. At most only about 20 percent raise their hands. The rest seem dazed, unable to locate the place that politics might occupy in their lives. But they listen, and after a while they begin to ask questions.

Quite obviously, the initiative, the trigger, the jolt that will break the spell of depoliticization, has to come from somewhere else. Perhaps, it has to come from the young professionals who have stayed, the ones currently occupying the bottom rungs of the shrinking middle class. They would have first-hand experience with all the habits of a dysfunctional society. Even if they may be set on leaving the country eventually, they cannot help but feel violated by the cyclical rule of the corrupt and the unfit. That feeling was the same force that fueled Edsa I and Edsa II.

Young professionals have a natural constituency in the youth who are in school. But they have to recover from the despair brought about by the failed expectations of the two Edsas. For them to unleash the energy of the young, they must summon the audacity to imagine and offer themselves as the alternative.

* * *

Comments to public.lives@gmail.com

World's greatest show

REBEL WITHOUT A CLUE

Patricia Evangelista

THE CARNIVAL'S BACK IN TOWN.

There is the sound of pounding drum and skipping feet, exploding lights and dizzying color. There are singers on soapboxes and jesters on stilts, some wearing old masks with newly-painted smiles, others changing masks for every song and every audience. There is wrestling and dancing, whispered gossip, sleaze and sneers, the traditional taunting and teasing sung to the rhythm of tinny music. It's election season, and it's Mardi Gras on the Philippine stage.

In 2004, Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas, a virtual unknown to the general public, proved the power of political advertising. A September 2003 opinion poll put him at No. 22, well out of the golden circle of 12. Most participants in focus group discussions claimed they had never heard of him until he suddenly became Mar Roxas, "Mr. Palengke," dancing his way to No. 1 to the Senate to the tune of Parokya ni Edgar's "Mr. Suave." Based on his campaign expenditure report submitted to the Commission on Elections, Roxas spent an astounding P69.4 million on his television ads, scoring an equally astounding 18,997,118 votes, three million more than his closest rival, actor Ramon Revilla Jr.

Behind the faces of these would-be-leaders are their political managers. They are the Merlins of the 21st century, the wizards and the kingmakers who create the Technicolor television images of this year's breed of the corrupt and the compromised. It is 2007, and in the age of the political ad, the winners are the TV stations, with GMA and ABS-CBN raking in millions dug from the deep pockets of the candidates. There is no lack in creativity. Sonia Roco uses her dead husband's image to score votes, Eduardo Angara shares in the glow of the talented young Sarah Geronimo, while Migz Zubiri is suddenly everyone's Amigo—I still tend to believe he should have listened to the suggestion he use "Zubirigood!"

According to a study by Nielsen Media Research Philippines, Team Unity's Rep. Prospero Pichay, has spent the most (P33 million) for TV ad spots in the first two weeks of the campaign. Reelectionist Senators Manuel Villar and Ralph Recto spent P30.29 million and P22.79 million, respectively.

The controversial Pichay, he of the rosy lips and bubblegum cheeks, claims it is money well spent. "I would not have decided to run if I did not believe I can win and I intend to win." His campaign, he says, is "like a pechay farm in full bloom." He extends his startling wit to his TV commercials, appealing to his viewers, "*Itanim si* Pichay." He promises nothing, smiles at everything and generally shakes people's hands.

Villar begins his commercial well enough, with people from his old Tondo hometown giving testimonials about their boy who did good. He was the boy who sold shrimp, worked in construction and carted gravel. And then, to the tune of the K and the Boxers' "Sasakyan Kita," a song whose sexual innuendos reach an even dozen, "Mr. Sipag at Tiyaga" begins swinging his hips and wiggling his behind to his laughing, hooting audience. From hard worker to traditional politician—the boy who did good seems to have sold out. It's lovely of the good senator to spend so much to produce a metaphor of the Philippine situation.

Recto, on the other hand, takes the metaphor to a higher level: his stage is straight from "Footloose" and "Saturday Night Fever," with competing teams of dancers dressed in baggy pants, chains and screaming greens and oranges lunging in opposition. Recto steps in, exuding great good will. In politics, he says, you pick who you're dancing with, who your allies are, and who your enemies will be—but he claims that there would be no arguments if everyone did what was best for the country. Every step (and this is during a particularly frenzied part of the dance showdown) must be done for the country and not contrary to development. His parents taught him to use mind and heart and conscience—and that is why he is for what is best for the majority. Suddenly, a phalanx of "common people" appear behind him, they sketch a checkmark on the air and declare, in chorus, "Correcto!" Vice President Noli de Castro does a cameo, and the voice that sold a thousand cases of brands resounds through the TV's speakers. "Recto sa Senado."

There is no attempt at platform and issue—it is the P22.79-million equivalent of the beauty queen raising two fingers and saying "world peace." It's a rather interesting way of saying absolutely nothing, using so many words, unless the good senator is lobbying for the permanent return of bad '80s fashion.

There is one particular commercial, however, that bears watching. The sequence opens with a dark stage, and white wrought iron seats in front of fake window frames, the one commercial that is perhaps most blatant in the fact it is staged and scripted. There is Keanna Reeves, and a Manny Pacquiao look-alike, grouped with another version of the "common people" all calling out for "*tol*"—*tol*, short for *utol*, Filipino slang for brother. And then there's that shot of former presidential chief of staff Mike Defensor, his braces sparkling under studio lights, walking away but lifting an arm in greeting. A director commented that the commercial seems to have been filmed at different times, that Defensor was never together with anyone in any of his shots, and that his point of view is inconsistent with the location of the people who were calling his name.

Perhaps, he was highlighting the government's inability to connect with the people, or emphasizing the phoniness of the current government. Talent manager and TV host extraordinaire Boy Abunda was supposed to have been in charge of Defensor's campaign image. My theory is that either Abunda is not as good as his reputation—which I doubt—or it was the best he could do with the product he was supposed to sell.

There are, of course, exceptions to this sort of commercials, perhaps due not so much to the production but to the personality behind it.

Many have commented on the failure of the current set of television advertisements to express the truth. I tend to disagree, and will even go so far as to say that the commercials are brutal in their honesty, brilliantly illustrating, in the most "correcto" way possible, not so much what's there, but what isn't.

* * *

For comments, just text: PM REBEL name, age, location, message then send to 2948 for Globe/Sun and 3940 for Smart. E-mail at rebel.inquirer@gmail.com

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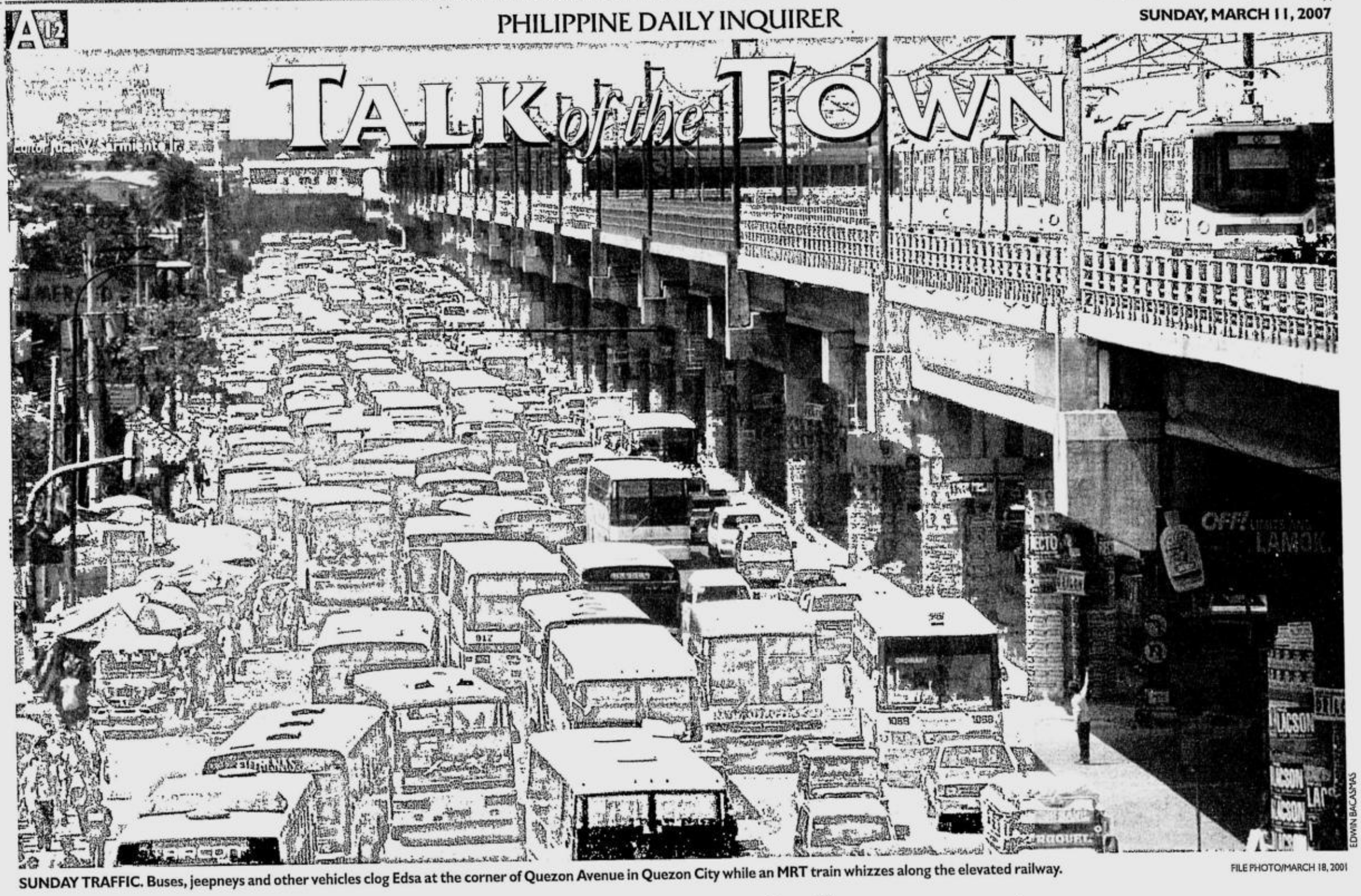
TALK of the TOWN



SUNDAY TRAFFIC. Buses, jeepneys and other vehicles clog Edsa at the corner of Quezon Avenue in Quezon City while an MRT train whizzes along the elevated railway.

EDWIN BACASMAS

FILE PHOTO/MARCH 18, 2001

Environmental footprint and sustainable urban mobility

(Editor's Note: The article featured here is one of the three essays written by Filipinos out of the 25 winners from 15 countries in the recently concluded annual student essay competition on Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. The contest was sponsored by the Asian Development Bank.

A three-member independent jury reviewed each of the more than 600 essays submitted by students across the region. The competition is part of a series of educational events that will precede ADB's 40th Annual Meeting in Kyoto, Japan on May 6 and 7.

The essays—written from a country or regional perspective—addressed one of three specific topics: economic growth and environmental conservation; human resource development and institutions; and industry and infrastructure.

All winners are invited to participate in a week-long program that will culminate in the Youth Forum on Sustainable Development in Kyoto on March 17.)

By Ritchie Anne Sarra Guzman

THE RAPID ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT in Asian countries has been associated with growing motorization, industrialization, urbanization and increased energy consumption.

These processes, happening all at the same time in Asia, have resulted inevitably in a corresponding pressure on urban environmental systems. Greenhouse gas emissions have increased and urban air quality has deteriorated.

The infamous London smog of 1952 is probably the most notable example of how industrialization activities and energy use take a toll on the quality of the air we breathe.

It is a strong characteristic of an era in which protection of the environment takes a backseat to economic growth.

Experiences in present-day London suggest, however, that increased economic development can also translate to an increased capacity to address pressures on environmental systems. London's Congestion Charging scheme, for instance, required some $488 million in upfront capital investment to address the growing traffic problem.

This intervention has been able to cut traffic levels in Central London by 15 percent and delays by 20 percent, while increasing bus speeds by 20 percent and the number of annual bus passengers by 7 percent, according to the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy.

A study benchmarking the air quality management capability of some 20 Asian cities shows that cities with high levels of economic development tend to have well-developed management capabilities to minimize air pollution, with Hong Kong, Singapore, Taipei and Tokyo distinguished as the most excellent examples. Notably, these cities have the capacity to apply high technology to the problem, which subsequently resulted in low air pollution levels. This has enhanced the quality of life of their people and advanced the goals of economic development.

Metro Manila, a mega city where I live, falls somewhere in the middle of the spectrum of the 20 Asian cities studied for air quality management capacity. This means that the country has developed systematic air quality management procedures, which have resulted in a progressive decrease in air pollution levels.

The good news is that we have been able to put the policy and institutional framework in place to promote the right of the Filipino people to breathe clean air since the enactment of the Philippine Clean Air Act in 1999.

The bad news is that we are not quite there yet in terms of meeting either the standards set by national laws or guidelines of the World Health Organization. Some of the major drawbacks to alleviating the problem of air pollution in the Philippines include weak institutional capacity, poorly enforced laws, and inadequate investment in infrastructure.

Cost of traffic, air pollution

In the meantime, air pollution continues to pose a big threat to the health and productivity of people living in Manila. Traffic congestion and smoke-belching buses carrying 2.34 million passengers on Edsa, the 12-lane principal circumferential highway in Metro Manila, are the most visible reminders of the need to manage air quality.

Economists have estimated that the annual economic loss due to traffic congestion in Metro Manila is approximately $2.8 billion. The World Bank has estimated that in Manila, the annual economic loss from the effects of air pollution on health and productivity is $392 million.

Compounding the problem of traffic congestion and air pollution is the increase in vehicle ownership in the Philippines. On average, 50,000 additional vehicles are registered each year. In 2006, 5,059,753 vehicles were registered, of which roughly 35 percent were in Metro Manila.

Global warming

Imagine how much traffic and emissions Metro Manila is forced to accommodate in its streets when the equally large population of public utility vehicles is taken into account.

The rising number of motor vehicles due to growing transport and economic demand is representative of the Asian situation. We see generally increasing demands for energy consumption, electricity generation, oil and coal consumption, and motorization, all of which are used for activities that push economic advancement but contribute to both the regional air pollution problem and global warming.

In fact, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded in its 2001 assessment that "an increasing body of observations gives a collective picture of a warming world and other changes in the climate system" and "the balance of evidence suggests a discernible human influence on the global climate."

Clearly, the factor primarily responsible for climatic changes comes from anthropogenic greenhouse gases through fuel combustion, including the millions of private cars and public vehicles being registered every year.

Thankfully, the Philippine government shifted its paradigm from the traditional "road investment-economic development" to a more progressive mindset of improving infrastructure that encourages sustainable mobility of goods and people. The two million cars in Metro Manila transport only about 20 percent of the population, hence building more roads was an imprudent use of resources, while the introduction of the rail transit network was not.

Metro Rail Transit

The Edsa Metro Rail Transit (MRT) system is designed to carry 23,000 passengers per hour per direction, initially, and is expandable to accommodate 48,000 passengers per hour, per direction. It is a strategy that aims to alleviate the chronic traffic congestion along the Edsa corridor, manage air quality, and reduce carbon dioxide emissions (hence, mitigate climate change) when private vehicle owners opt to use the public transportation system.

Due to financial constraints, however, the rail transport system in Metro Manila has not been built to cover the whole stretch of the thoroughfare. While Edsa is about 54 kilometers long, the MRT line is only 16.8 km. As a result, many commuters who ride the rail-based system are compelled to take other forms of fuel-based public transport such as buses, jeepneys, FX taxis and even tricycles, just to get to and away from an MRT station.

The surrounding structure of the MRT station does not encourage nonmotorized transportation either because ample pedestrian walkways, bike lanes and parking are lacking. The drawback of a transportation system that is not fully integrated is traffic congestion, along with its ancillary results, that remains a problem.

Nonetheless, having this mass transport facility is a welcome respite. It enables the moving of a greater number of people more efficiently (lesser travel time promotes more economic activity) with lesser emissions, which ultimately adds up to better quality of life for all.

Learning curve

One advantage of being a developing country, perhaps, is that the learning curve is not as steep as it was for industrialized countries. We are slowly learning that an efficient and reliable public transport system is a key ingredient to promoting environmental sustainability and economic advancement.

The development path further suggests that adopting a co-benefits strategy that combines and integrates urban air quality management with climate change mitigation measures gives greater results than if those objectives were pursued separately.

Bogota, Colombia proved this to be true when the executive board of the United Nations Clean Development Mechanism approved for the first time a methodology for transport projects following their TransMilenio SA example.

Indeed, urban air pollution and climate change have many common causes and often require similar management and mitigation strategies. Having an efficient and sustainable transportation system provides a good avenue for addressing those global issues.

More importantly, it is where economics and environment go together as the relationship between economic growth and travel demand is acknowledged. Compared with private vehicle travel, public transport is much more efficient on a per-kilometer basis.

Hence, before our car causes another drought, hurricane, glacier-melt, or case of lung cancer, like the proverbial butterfly that flapped its wings in Beijing and caused a tornado in Oklahoma, it is always good to explore the potential of sustainable mobility.

Millennium Development Goals

In addition, developing sustainable forms of transport contributes to realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set by the United Nations by providing accessibility to people at minimal cost. While it may not have been emphasized in the MDGs, interventions from the transport sector are instrumental in achieving most of the targets by 2015.

Making nonmotorized transport modes available benefits the poor most. Providing good walking facilities and biking infrastructure makes it possible for people to make short trips practically for free. Without such facilities, poor people are forced to use more expensive motorized modes, such as the popular but grossly polluting 2- and 3-wheelers [motorcycles and tricycles], which drive up their costs of living and the costs of goods and services.

A free-for-all road like Edsa can move perhaps 3,000 to 4,000 passengers per lane per direction. Once the peak hours hit and the roads become congested, there is an increase in travel costs, such as fuel consumption and impact on health and productivity. An exclusive bus lane can move up to 20,000 passengers per direction per peak hour and can enable buses to maintain speeds of up to 27 km per hour.

Bus Rapid Transit

Hence, the introduction of exclusive bus facilities on an existing right-of-way can significantly improve the targeting of that road asset to the benefit of the poor.

This alternative mass transit mode, as used in Bogota, is more popularly known as the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system. It is a bus-based transit system that imitates the speed and performance of a rail system through exclusive right-of-way lanes. The greatest advantage of establishing a BRT over railways is the cost.

Aside from the high cost of building and maintaining a rail-based system, considerable attention must also be given to the operational cost it entails. The 16.8-km Edsa MRT, for instance, is being subsidized by the government at [P3.248 billion] annually.

If the BRT concept had been adopted in Metro Manila instead of the MRT, the mass transport system would have reached nearby provinces with the same budget, which would have created compact suburban areas and decongested the city further.

Sustainable mobility provides the opportunity for economic advancement through the establishment of viable long-term infrastructure and expansion of public transport modes. Half of the effort, as the other Asian cities with low air pollution have demonstrated, may have to come from technological improvements, whether from fuels, vehicles, engines or infrastructure, and be achieved within a certain degree of economic power.

Providing the right climate for a supportive investment framework and enabling policies for sustainable urban mobility will have a profound effect on the control of global greenhouse gases and air pollutants from vehicle emissions, while paving the way for lighter environmental footprints and stronger economic development.

(Ritchie Anne Sarra Guzman is a student at the Ateneo de Manila University.)

Emissions from mobile sources in Metro Manila

(2000, in thousand metric tons)

Source	Number of Vehicles	Fuel	PM10	CO	NOx	SOx	VOC exhaust	VOC evaporative
Cars	480,000	Gasoline	0.7	400	22	0.5	50	670
	15,000	Diesel	0.4	1.5	1.4		0.4	
Utility	290,000	Gasoline	1.2	650	34	12	90	920
vehicles	420,000	Diesel	19	55	30		16	
Trucks	96,000	Diesel	7.3	65	65	1.9	19	
Buses	500	Gasoline		2.1	0.2		2.1	
	12,000	Diesel	1.7	11	11	0.3	11	
Motorcycles, Tricycles	370,000	Gasoline	8.5	130	1.8		84	12
Subtotal	1,141,000	Gasoline	10.4	1,182	58	0	226	1,600
	543,000	Diesel	28.4	133	107	15	46	0
Total	**1,684,000**		**38.8**	**1,315**	**165**	**15**	**272**	**1,600**

PM10=particulate matter, 10 microns of diameter or smaller; CO=carbon monoxide; NOx=oxides of nitrogen; SOx=oxides of sulfur; VOC=volatile organic compound

Source: Resources for the Future Discussion Paper, December 2003, titled "Air Pollution Control Policy Options for Metro Manila." By Alan Krupnick, Richard Morgenstern, Carolyn Fischer, Kevin Rolfe, Jose Logarta and Bing Rufo

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Alternative sought in Pampanga polls

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—A PAMPANGA BISHOP ON Friday took a strong stand against corruption and the illegal numbers game "jueteng," and appealed to "respectable" Kapampangans to run as alternatives to two gubernatorial candidates linked to those issues.

"I am still hopeful that a decent and charismatic non-politician Kapampangan who can say no to jueteng and no to corrupt quarrying would come out before the end of March and give the Kapampangans... the alternative they deserve, win or lose," said Bishop Virgilio David.

"I call on the Kapampangans to help restore the Filipino trust in people power inspired by gospel values and principles," he said.

The INQUIRER sought David for comments as Catholic lay leaders pressed Church leaders to provide moral counsel in the run-up to the May 14 elections.

Some people had called the INQUIRER to say they were planning to boycott the elections if their choices for governor were only between reelectionist Gov. Mark Lapid, son of Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid, and Board Member Lilia Pineda, wife of suspected jueteng lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda.

For two weeks now, lay leaders had been circulating text messages rejecting the reelection bid of the governor and the candidacy of Lilia Pineda.

"I challenge both candidates to categorically say no to jueteng and no to corruption. If they cannot say so, then I think, as a member of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, we should look for other options," said David.

David was the first leader of the Catholic Church in Pampanga to publicly state his views on the two candidates and the issues linked to them.

Only in media reports have the two candidates denied the allegations raised against them. They have not agreed to face each other in a public debate.

Governor Lapid, 28, is one of 24 respondents in a graft case filed by Vice Gov. Joseller Guiao on March 2 on five supposed double-funded but ghost projects.

Guiao, the running mate of Pineda, is set to file another case for graft involving the alleged stealing of public funds from taxes collected by the capitol on Mt. Pinatubo's sand used for construction projects.

In January 2005, Guiao accused the Lapids of committing "corruption of plunder proportion" as he suspected them to be behind the alleged missing P500 million quarry taxes.

Investigations by two congressional committees since February 2005 have not pinned down the Lapids for the supposed wrongdoing.

Lilia Pineda, on the other hand, had been tagged as the one who handed out money to Commission on Elections officials a few months before the canvassing for the May 2004 elections.

Governor Lapid had claimed the issues against him were politically motivated. Senator Lapid had also denied Guiao's charges.

Lilia Pineda had said her husband had not meddled in her political career in the last 19 years and was not expected to dictate his decisions on her when she is elected governor.

Bong Pineda, in an earlier interview, said he had not operated jueteng or participated in any poll cheating operations.

David said he was only being consistent with the stand of the CBCP.

The CBCP, through its president, Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, issued a pastoral statement on Jan. 28 urging Catholics to "apply the values of the Gospel to our electoral process." *With a report from Estanislao Caldez, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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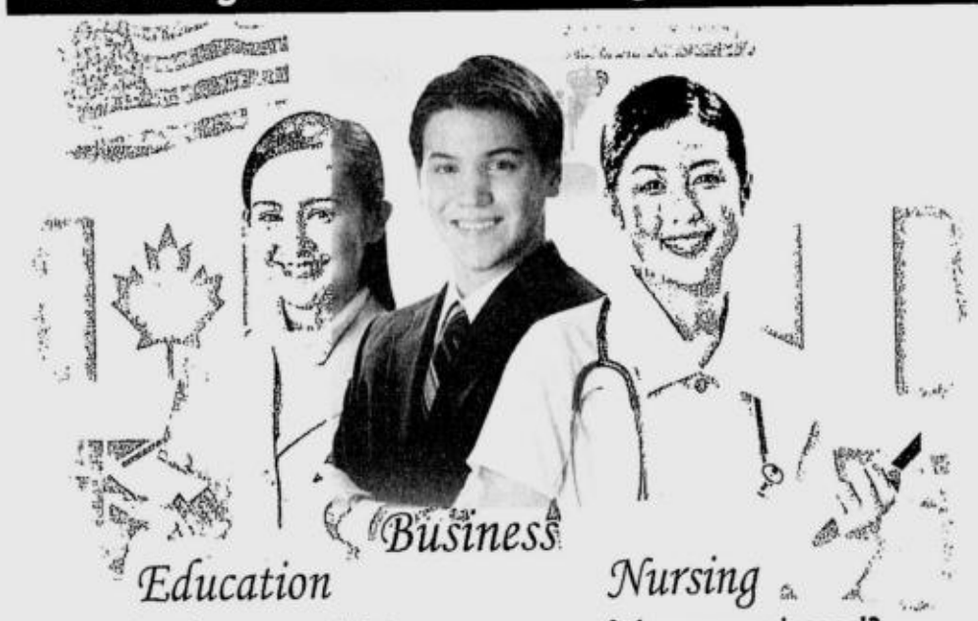

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De Venecia says he's sure Gloria party won't field bet against him

DAGUPAN CITY—SPEAKER JOSE DE Venecia Jr. is confident that the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), a party affiliated with the administration, will not field any candidate against him in the fourth congressional district race in Pangasinan.

De Venecia, president of the dominant administration party Lakas-CMD, said Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte, Kampi president, has told him that Kampi has denied the application for membership of former Philippine National Police chief Arturo Lomibao, one of the two possible candidates that the Speaker would face in the race.

Lomibao earlier announced his intention to challenge De Venecia's reelection bid in the fourth congressional district. A possible third candidate is Dagupan City Mayor Benjamin Lim, who represented the district from 1998 to 2001.

De Venecia, in a telephone interview on Saturday, also said First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo sent him a text message saying Kampi, which President Macapagal-Arroyo helped organize, will not field any candidate against him.

"I am the candidate of the coalition parties following the equity of the incumbent rule," De Venecia said.

He said Villafuerte also assured him that he would not run for Speaker of the next Congress.

"I am his candidate [for Speaker]. [Villafuerte] will be supporting me," said De Venecia.

On Saturday, Lomibao said he was "99.99 percent" sure of running for representative but has yet to receive confirmation on the status of his application for membership to Kampi.

Lomibao, who resigned as administrator of the National Irrigation Administration, said his decision to run for representative has no blessing from the President.

"What's important is the blessing of the people, not the President's, but it's a plus factor," he told reporters here.

Lomibao said he did not talk to Ms Arroyo about his plan to run against De Venecia, but he assumed that the President already knew of his plan through her political advisers.

But he said when he talked to Ms Arroyo about his plan to run for Pangasinan governor three weeks ago, the President did not discourage or encourage him.

"When I told the President that I was running [for governor], she did not say yes, she did not say no. She did not encourage (or) discourage me," Lomibao said.

Lim said he and Lomibao were talking and "comparing notes."

"Everybody has a right to run," Lim said. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

POSTER AREA ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS
An area designated for campaign posters and materials turns also into a refuge for the homeless in Jaro district in Iloilo City.

Vendor twice a victim of fire in Cebu

By Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—FOUR days after a four-hour fire razed his home in Mandaue City, a 27-year-old vendor fell victim to another fire, which hit his small store and 19 others in a market in Barangay Centro, Mandaue City yesterday dawn.

On top of this misfortune, the owners of the other burned stalls accused Ramonito Arsenal, who was among the thousands who lost their homes in a fire that raged for almost four hours on Wednesday, of intentionally setting his store on fire.

SFO4 Jose Laurito, deputy fire marshal of the Mandaue City fire department, said police even detained Arsenal for a few hours due to the allegations and to keep him safe from his irate co-vendors.

Laurito said Arsenal was released yesterday morning after they found that the fire was accidental.

They are not fit to write our laws

BY FRANCISCO S. TATAD

The Cayetano-Pimentel position cannot be made the starting point of a respectable senatorial career

THE fielding of Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III and Alan Peter Cayetano as senatorial candidates only means that the "Genuine Opposition" does not mind creating simultaneous dynasties in our exceptionally small Senate, in violation of the Constitution and the rules of decency and fairness. This is sad.

"Koko" is the son of Senate Minority Leader Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr., and routinely mistaken by many for his father; and Alan is the brother of Sen. Pia Cayetano, from whom we have not heard much. Both Nene and Pia will be in the Senate until 2010. Should the duo win, the Pimentels will have a larger presence in the Senate than the whole of Muslim Mindanao, and the Cayetanos will claim a privilege denied to all those who had ever sat there, not to mention the 18 million families that make up the 90-million Filipino population.

To our standing objection, the candidates have replied, "there is no law against it." This nonbiodegradable nonsense has since been made the stuff of their sloganeering. Some candidates have repeated it, without realizing that in so doing, they were putting themselves in the same position as the dynasty candidates.

The Cayetano-Pimentel position is immoral, unconstitutional, and in extremely bad taste. It cannot be made the starting point of a respectable senatorial career. Good taste alone should have deterred them, but it is not just a question of good taste. It is a question of law—moral law and constitutional law.

Article 2, Section 26 of the Constitution provides: "The State shall guarantee equal access to opportunities for public service, and prohibit political dynasties as may be defined by law." For those who have no desire to play games with the law, there is more than enough law in this provision. But for those who want to put their personal interests above everything else, there will never be enough law, even if an enabling law existed.

It is retrograde and perverse for anyone who wants to sit in the Senate to argue that since there is no enabling law, what the Constitution says should be ignored. A trial lawyer might be forgiven such statement, but not someone who wants to write the nation's laws.

The absence of a law does not justify behavior that would be surely prohibited, if the law existed. Laws are enacted so that, even without law, the people will conduct themselves in such a manner as though there was a law that prescribed it. St. Paul's letter to the Romans (2:14-15) says: "When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness..."

Far from diminishing the constitutional mandate, therefore, the failure of Congress to enact the enabling law only sharpens the obligation of those who sit or want to sit in Congress to respect that mandate, rather than exploit the absence of an enabling law for their own personal advantage.

Adjective law defines what is justiciable, but the idea of what is right and what is wrong always precedes any enactment. The good of society can only be secured by men and women who will act not only according to what is written in statute but above all according to what is written upon their hearts. Otherwise, our politics will remain no better than a pigsty, often unfit even for pigs.

These candidates take us for morons when they suggest—for this is what they do—that they want to become senators so they could write the law that would in future prohibit people like themselves from becoming senators.

So much has been said about the candidates' supposed intelligence. If true, that can never be concealed. But moral character defines a man much more than any display of intelligence. A man of intelligence will know the difference between right and wrong, but it takes a man of character to say No to something apparently desirable but morally wrong. An intelligent man without character has nothing to say to anybody, least of all to the nation.

One who aspires to sit in the Senate must first be a man of character, whatever his level of intelligence. He should be able to argue against his self-interest and his appetite for power, pleasure or personal aggrandizement. He must be able to control his concupiscence, especially if he is truly intelligent.

Because GO failed to do its duty, the dynasty candidates now say, "let the people decide." Of course. If the process is clean, the people will decide. But one who really wants to serve the people must only propose to them that which is morally desirable. He must not propose anything immoral in the hope that the people are ignorant enough or angry enough not to know or to care about the difference. Demagogues and charlatans do this, but not men of real worth and substance.

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Ordeal of Moros in the war on terror

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By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Davao City

DR. ABDUL MANAR SALIDDIN was obviously emotional and his effort to remain composed became apparent as he took the podium and spoke in front of hundreds of his fellow Moros here Saturday.

The thought of his younger brother, now still languishing inside a congested detention cell in Taguig with other Moros from Basilan, he later said, was like a revolving slide show.

He recounts his brother's ordeal as his voice trembled.

His brother, Moner, was among the 73 residents of Basilan who were rounded up on July 13, 2001 on suspicion that they were members of the Abu Sayyaf Group. His father, Munap, despite his old age, was also detained with his brother.

They were blamed for the kidnapping of teachers and students of an elementary school in Tumahubong town in Basilan in 2000.

He said his brother, who was 25 years old at that time, was arrested for the reason that his name was Abdulmoner. His father, whose name was Monap, accompanied his brother for fear that he would be summarily executed by the military.

Same names

Listed in the order of battle of the military was a certain Muner Monap, an Abu Sayyaf bandit.

The arrest immediately came after President Macapagal-Arroyo declared the entire Basilan province under a "state of lawlessness."

The declaration allowed the arrest of anyone suspected of being a member of the Abu Sayyaf, or sympathizers, even without a warrant. The crackdown, according to human rights watchdogs, turned the province into a "virtual garrison."

Abdulmoner's arrest came early morning of July 13, 2001 when a number of soldiers stormed the house of the Saliddins in the village of Tupay in Isabela City. Outside the house was a man who was wearing a mask and pointed at Abdulmoner as a member of the Abu Sayyaf.

At that time, he was taking up an engineering course at the AC College in Zamboanga City.

On that same day, Hadji Royo Palao, 54, was arrested by government soldiers. He recalled that the military operatives tied him up while he was checking on squid delivered by a Badjao child to his mini-wharf in Barangay Tabok, also in Isabela.

Warrantless arrest

Palao said Marines came to his house with someone wearing a turban, a man who pointed to him as an Abu Sayyaf member.

Several other Marines came up the house and searched for firearms, particularly seven Armalite rifles.

THE CONTINUING hunt for the Abu Sayyaf leads these soldiers to a shipment of mortars that they seized from a ferry in Zamboanga City. AP

"But they didn't see any," said Palao.

He said despite failing to see any firearm, the Marines brought him to a military camp in Tabok where he was tied up. He said he saw the village chief in the same camp.

"He was arrested, too," he said.

Also with the village chief were the president of the Basilan Electric Cooperative and a student. After an hour, four other men arrived.

They were loaded into a military vehicle and transferred to the 103rd Brigade in Barangay Tabiawan. There, Palao said, he saw at least 20 others—fish vendors, fishermen, students, elderly, among others.

"Some were arrested while they were playing cards while the others were known addicts," Palao said.

The number of arrests kept rising. He said all of them were photographed and made to sign a letter attesting that they were not tortured by the military.

The Marines, he said, promised to release them if they signed the paper.

But the release didn't come and the torture did.

"They didn't hurt me but I know the others were tortured. One village official was tortured with chilis in his body," Palao said.

Two days after they were rounded up, all of them were brought to Southern Command in Zamboanga City. At 5 p.m., Palao said, they were all sent to the Zamboanga City Hall of Justice and it was only there that they learned about the charges against them.

Palao said they were accused of kidnapping 52 students and teachers in April 2001 in Tumaobong, Lamitan.

The real terrorist

A few weeks after his father and brother were arrested, Saliddin read in a newspaper a story about the arrest in Manila of one Moner Munap, who was allegedly the aide of slain Abu Sayyaf leader Abu Sabaya.

"The real Moner Munap was arrested but my brother is still in jail," Saliddin said.

For five months, all of those who were arrested stayed at the Zamboanga City jail. The cases against them were not heard.

Palao could be considered lucky because he only stayed in Taguig for a year. Together with 13 others, he was not identified by government witnesses as member of the Abu Sayyaf.

Fortunately, too, he was no longer in Camp Bagong Diwa when the alleged massacre of inmates, a number of them Abu Sayyaf bandits, happened on May 14, 2004. More than 20 people died in that massacre.

Saliddin's brother and father could also be considered lucky because they escaped the killings by hiding inside a small and an already crammed toilet inside their cell.

Ahmad Hamja's father, Muhammad Diya Hamja of Barangay Maligui in Basilan, also did what Saliddin's father and brother did just to escape death.

Ahmad was deeply disturbed by the arrest of his father that he once tried to commit suicide by jumping into the sea from a boat.

"The arrest destroyed our lives," said Ahmad.

"We lost our livelihood. My sister didn't pursue her education. I became the family's father," Ahmad said.

"My father spent three years in jail. The war on terror by the government is clearly anti-Moro," he said.

He said when he and his other relatives returned to Basilan, they were left with nothing.

"Our land is gone. Our two boats were sold off and our lot was mortgaged to pay for our lawyers," he said.

Hamja's father was freed because he, too, was not identified by the government witnesses as one of those who kidnapped the students and teachers in Lamitan. However, as one who still visits the remaining inmates in Taguig, Hamja is aghast at how things are going for his fellow Moro.

He said Mokem Idris, an Abu Sayyaf member, is already dead but another Mokem Idris is still in jail.

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GOVERNMENT troops, backed by armored vehicles, are deployed to Midsayap, North Cotabato as clashes with MILF guerrillas continue. The clashes threaten to disrupt talks between the government and the Moro rebel group. AFP

Escapees say they took shelter in MILF camps

COTABATO CITY—MOST OF THE 48 fugitives who bolted a North Cotabato jail on Feb. 2 are hiding in areas identified with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), two of the escapees recently recaptured by authorities said.

Johnny Malib, 28, and Andy Serrano, 30, said some of their companions have sought refuge inside Camp Rajamuda in Pikit town while others are now inside MILF territories in Maguindanao.

The MILF has repeatedly denied it was coddling the fugitives—including three alleged bomb experts identified with the Jemaah Islamiyah—and even offered help in bringing them back to government custody.

"Some are taking refuge in the Liguasan Marsh," Serrano told radio station dxND in Kidapawan City.

Serrano and Malib were captured in the continuing manhunt against the escapees.

Serrano said after they were freed by a group of gunmen, led by a certain Boro, they proceeded to Barangay Marbel in Matalam town, also in North Cotabato, and stayed there for five days.

Later, they broke into smaller groups and hid in the Liguasan Marsh.

Serrano and Malib said they eventually joined fugitives Indol and Kalen Kota and moved to Barangay Pedtad in Kabacan town.

Indol and Kalen were later killed and Serrano and Malib were recaptured.

"I really did not want to join the escape but the gunmen threatened to shoot us, so we were forced to join them," he told investigators.

North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol said the claim of the inmates only bolstered suspicions that the attack on the jail was staged by the MILF to rescue three of its members accused of taking part in various bombings in Central Mindanao.

They were identified as Mundos Kair, Sultan Datu Ali and Guindo Tokan.

The MILF has disowned the three suspected bombers, saying they were members of the Pentagon Gang, a criminal group engaged in kidnapping and gunrunning. *Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao*

Rival farmers seek review of land titles in hacienda

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—TWO GROUPS of farmers involved in the Hacienda Velez-Malaga conflict called for the review of the land ownership awards granted to the opposing groups of farmers, instead of pushing for the resignation of Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman, as a way to resolve the problem.

The Task Force Mapalad (TFM) had called for Pangandaman's resignation after he failed to install on Thursday the TFM members who hold certificates of land ownership in the Hacienda Velez-Malaga in La Castellana, Negros Occidental.

"What is needed is a review of the certificates of land ownership award granted to the opposing groups on the farm," farmer-beneficiary Romulo Espinosa said at a press conference of the Hacienda Malaga Cuenca Multi-Purpose Cooperative (MCMC) and the Hacienda Malaga Independent Workers Union (HMIWU).

Espinosa admitted that the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program is good but he noted that the problem is in the manner of its implementation.

On the other hand, Lani Factor, of the TFM, said they are studying the possible legal action they could take against Pangandaman, who had said there was no legal impediment to installing the farmers, for failing to install the TFM members.

A GROUP of policemen sent to Hacienda Malaga-Velez awaits instructions during the aborted installation of farmers on portions of the estate that were placed under the CARP. CARLA P. GOMEZ/INQUIRER VISAYAS

Factor said that a pending Supreme Court case cited by Pangandaman on the Velez-Malaga property was not a hindrance to the installation of the TFM members.

She also said more people from Mindanao would join the 21 Velez-Malaga farmers on hunger strike at the Department of Agrarian Reform office in Quezon City.

But Espinosa said the TFM hunger strike was just propaganda to pressure DAR. He claimed that not all of those on a hunger strike are from Hacienda Velez-Malaga.

He also urged former Commission on Elections Chair Christian Monsod, who has pushed for the installation of the TFM members, to go to Hacienda Velez Malaga to see the real situation.

"We used to have a lot of respect for Christian Monsod. And we wish he would come to Negros to hear our side, too, before taking the side of TFM," Espinosa said.

At least 198 members of the MCMC and the HMIWU opposed the installation of the TFM members on, what they claim, is the prime area of the farm.

"The TFM members were given the best portion of the land, while we, who are the original tillers of the farm, were given an area far away from most of our homes and the main road," HMIWU president Rodolfo Tupas Sr. said.

Tupas said only 57 of the 122 TFM beneficiaries are original tillers of the Hacienda Velez-Malaga. He urged them to join the cooperative members so they could co-exist peacefully.

In a statement read by Tupas, the Velez-Malaga cooperative and union members thanked all those who helped hold off the installation of the TFM members on Thursday.

"We all know that it was not a simple cause. We were up against the invincible Department of Agrarian Reform and the untouchable Task Force Mapalad. But through your prayers of intervention, nothing was impossible," the statement said.

Gunmen open fire at truck with civilians, kill 7 riders

By Alex Pal
Inquirer Visayas

DUMAGUETE CITY—SEVEN people were killed in La Libertad town in Negros Oriental late Friday when still unidentified gunmen opened fire at a government truck carrying people, including schoolchildren, in Barangay Manlumisag, some 7 km from the town's national highway.

The victims were on their way home to the mountain barangay of Aya, the farthest barangay of the town, after they attended a writing contest in La Libertad town, some 108 km north of Dumaguete.

La Libertad Mayor Josie Limkaichong identified the fatalities as Aya barangay captain Lidio Baylon, forest guard Rudy Maxilom, Dionald Bastillano and four unidentified hitchhikers. None of the children, who were among the passengers, were injured.

An ambulance of the La Libertad town brought two of the injured, Jorlan Baylon and Ignacia Salimbagat, to the Negros Oriental Provincial Hospital here just before 10 p.m. Friday.

Aya barangay councilor Edensito Beli-ot and Julito dela Cruz, who were also injured in the ambush, were treated at the Guihulngan District Hospital.

Provincial Police Director Senior Supt. Melvin Ramon Buenafe said the main target of the ambush appeared to be the barangay captain.

The civilians in the area said that the gunmen pumped a bullet into the head of the barangay captain, who was already dead, before leaving.

Limkaichong said the killing might have been politically motivated. She said the barangay captain was one of her staunch supporters.

"Even before that incident, rumors had been circulating that he was going to be a target by this group but we still cannot say as to who the perpetrators are," Limkaichong said.

Meanwhile, Buenafe said the police have yet to determine the motive for the ambush and have considered as possible angles either politics or insurgency. Barangay Aya has been identified as an insurgency-affected barangay, he pointed out.

Buenafe visited the ambush site Friday night and interviewed witnesses, who said at least 10 suspects were seen fleeing the site after the gun attack.

Clark case raises questions on Internet gambling

ANGELES CITY—THE FILING OF an illegal gambling case against a suspected online gambling operator in Clark and the case's consequent dismissal by the city prosecutor's office have raised an important question to the government: Does the Philippines need an anti-Internet gambling law?

For Second Assistant City Prosecutor Oliver Garcia, a law that prohibits gambling over the Internet is necessary to prosecute suspected operators.

In dismissing the National Bureau of Investigation's case against several Taiwanese officials and some 33 Filipino online dealers of the British Grand Vision International Co. Inc. and the TransGlobal Pacific Airways Inc. last year, Garcia said Internet gambling was not covered by Presidential Decree 1602 (prescribing stiffer penalties on illegal gambling).

"PD 1602 was made into law by President Ferdinand Marcos in 1978, when computers were the sizes of several filing cabinets and had the computing power of a wristwatch calculator," Garcia said.

"The former President may have been a brilliant man, however, no amount of genius can foresee the development of this technology. Thus, it would be a tenuous stretch of imagination to assume that he foresaw the development of the Internet and the million and one uses people have put into it and that he envisioned PD 1602 to apply to alleged Internet gaming," he said.

The absence of real players in the alleged Internet gambling casino—which means there were no dealers and bettors to constitute an "illegal gambling activity" according to PD 1602—was enough reason to dismiss the case, he said.

"One could not charge the dealer alone without indicting the supposed bettor," he said.

The NBI has filed a petition for review of the case, which is pending with the Department of Justice.

The NBI maintained that although there were "no live players," there were actual online players who bet money on games that depend wholly or chiefly upon chance or hazard—which is outlawed by PD 1602 and Article 195 of the Revised Penal Code.

The outcome of the DOJ's review would resolve whether or not the case could be elevated to the court.

Aside from the pending petition for review at the DOJ on the dismissed illegal gambling case, the NBI is also defending the legality of the raid it conducted on a suspected Internet casino at the Clark Special Economic Zone on Oct. 17 last year.

Judge Omar Viola of the regional trial court here granted on Dec. 28 last year the motion to invalidate the search warrant used by the NBI in raiding the suspected Internet casino's premises at the Civil Aviation Complex inside Clark.

On Jan. 15 this year, lawyer Renato Marcuap of the NBI special action unit filed a motion for reconsideration.

Viola, on Feb. 20, ordered the respondents to submit within 10 days their comment to the NBI's motion for reconsideration.

In February 2006, then Clark Development Corp. president, Antonio Ng, welcomed the British Grand Vision International Co. Inc. as a new information technology firm that would invest P200 million for computer technology data, website design and maintenance center in Clark.

Represented by its president, Steve Jing Chen Huang, who is among the respondents in the illegal gambling case filed by the NBI, the company announced that it would employ some 150 computer-skilled workers during its first year of operation. *Jun Malig, Inquirer Central Luzon*

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Castles in the air turn real for Navotas artist

ONE OF IBAÑEZ'S miniature creations: A castle protected by a dragon (left). PHOTOS BY RODEL ROTONI

By Nancy C. Carvajal

AS A CHILD, JAIME IBAÑEZ HAD many dreams. One of these was to live in a castle or failing that, to go to Disneyland California and see its famous attraction: Sleeping Beauty's castle.

The young boy was resigned to the fact that his dreams would remain just that—dreams.

So when Ibañez grew up, he did the next best thing: He built his own castles—small palaces that were perfect to the tiniest detail—from the highest turret to the drawbridge surrounded by a moat.

"I can't go to Disneyland or Europe to see real castles so I'll bring them to me through miniature art and share them with others who also dreamed of those things," the 34-year-old artist told the INQUIRER.

Ibañez was recently named by Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco as one of the town's outstanding citizens during its 101st foundation day.

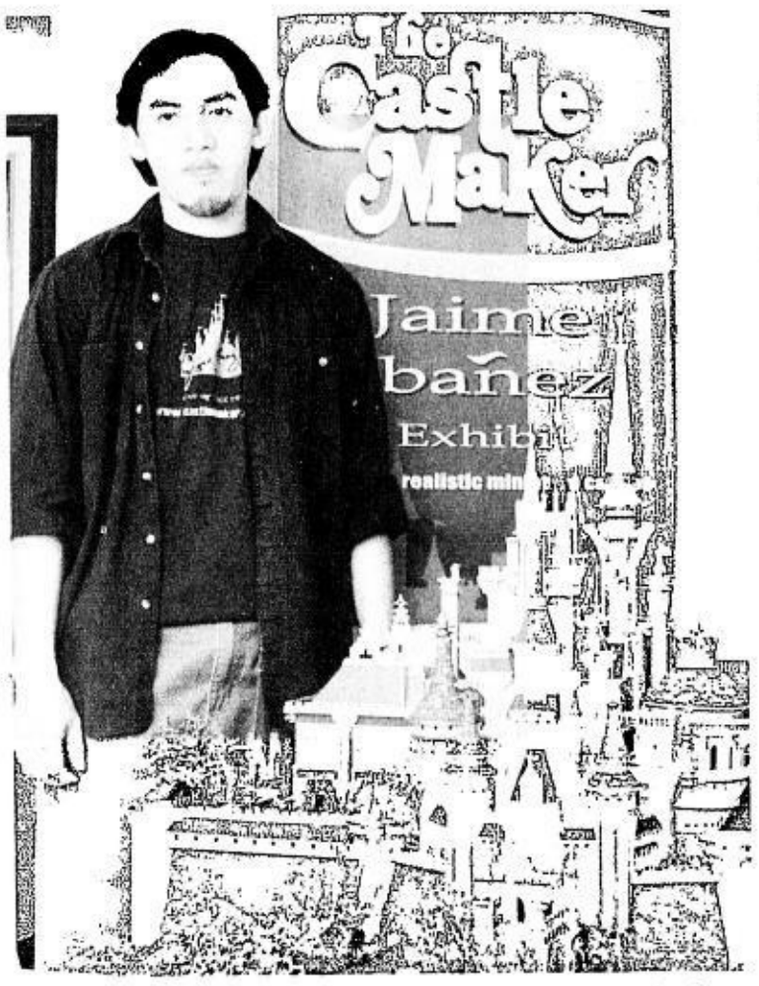
He was hailed as the country's "acknowledged castle maker" for his contribution to the design and creation of fairy tale castles and the motif of a popular theme park in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

An architecture graduate from New Era College in Quezon City, Ibañez is the concept and theme design artist of Enchanted Kingdom.

He designed the castle-like entrance of the theme park.

"I am happy to be part of the team that transformed a barren land into a tourist spot," he said.

He was just 6 years old, Ibañez recalled, when he started building castles and robots from folders, glue and discarded materials.



CASTLE maker Jaime Ibañez: I still dream of going to Disneyland.

"Both my parents, though not known painters, loved to draw. Maybe I inherited my skill from them," he said.

Over the years, his interest in building fairy tale castles expanded to historical churches and heritage architecture houses.

He also added futuristic designs to his work, using latex paint, illustration boards and of course, scrap materials.

"You have to keep up with the times," Ibañez said.

He is hopeful that one day, miniatures will be considered part of contemporary art.

"I dream of having my own showroom where kids can come and design their own palaces," he said.

He added, "I intend to work for a foundation for free, teaching children miniature art."

Miniature art, according to Ibañez, is good for children because it teaches them concentration.

"Like any art, miniatures need a lot of patience and skill. It can help them focus on what they are doing and can improve their creativity," he said.

Another plus: "Materials for miniature art are also easy to acquire. One just has to know how it is done," Ibañez added.

Best of all, even though it may be intricate and require tremendous concentration, miniature art is fun to do.

He may be all grown up but the artist who remains a boy at heart still has not given up on his dream of one day going to Disneyland.

But until then, he will go on building his own castles.

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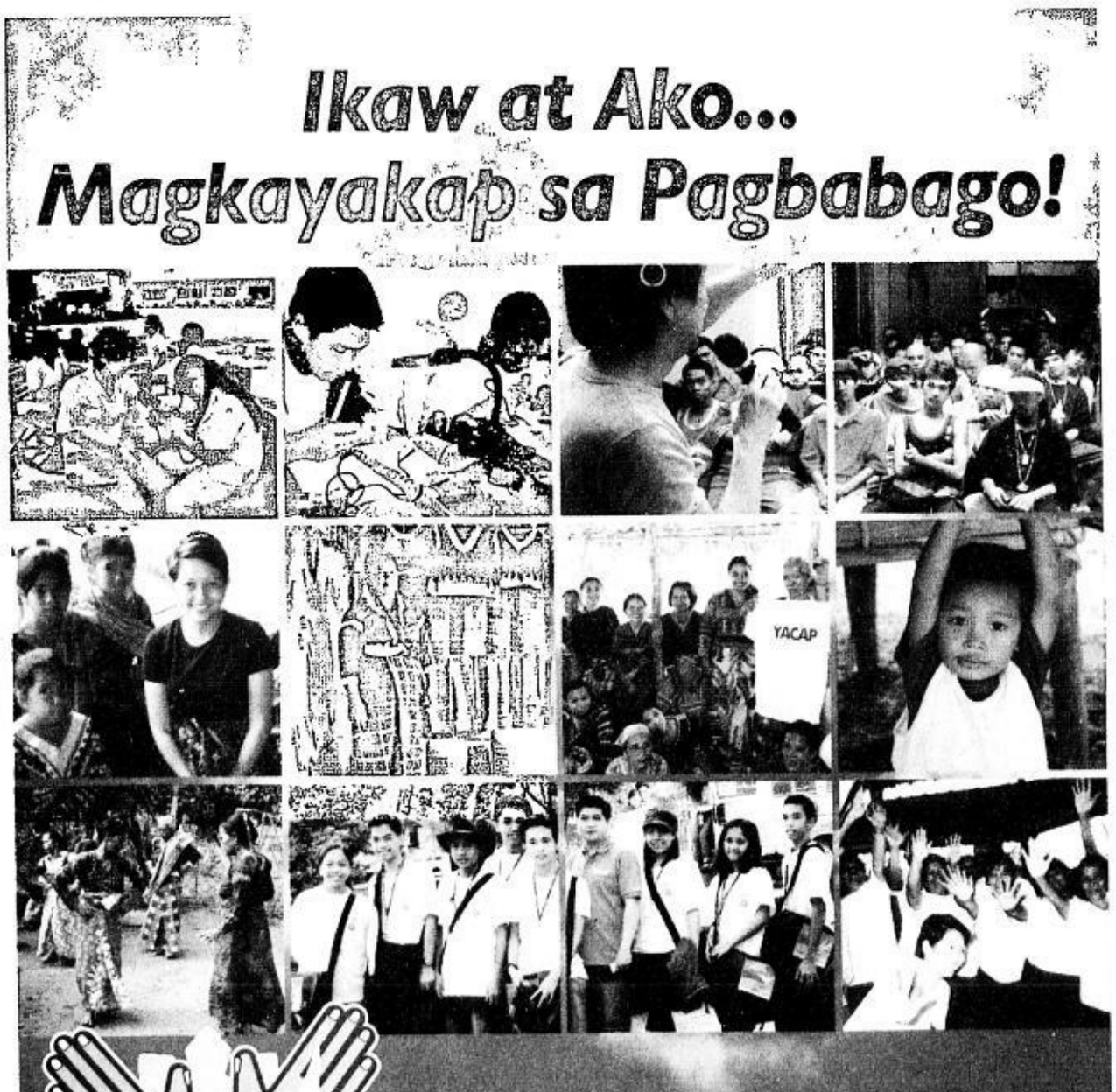

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Editor Gerry Lirio

SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 2007

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This section is dedicated to Filipinos overseas toiling on land and at sea, in factories, in construction sites and in the homes of the world, and wherever work can be contracted to secure a better life for their families. These are their stories.

Lone Asian faculty member in London classroom is Pinoy

By Volt Contreras

LONDON—A FEW fateful clicks on "Google" when he was still based in Tarlac City eventually led this school teacher to a classroom just behind the British Parliament and a few minutes away from the fascinating London Eye.

For the last five years, Edison Peña David has been the lone Asian faculty member in Vauxhall, a public primary school catering to pupils aged 3 to 11, where with relative ease and flair he has shown that an educator's passion knows no cultural differences.

Primarily a math teacher, among the other administrative hats he wears on campus, 33-year-old David adheres to some seemingly simple, "universal" approaches to handling kids in any classroom in the world.

"Rather than scold them or emphasize their misbehavior, I always try 'catching' them whenever they behave or perform well. I believe more in giving incentives than penalties," he said in an interview with the INQUIRER. *(See story below for his first-person account.)*

Clarity of purpose

"You can treat them as adults by showing that you apply your rules consistently, but remember that children love to explore and test boundaries," he said.

"I always remind them that they are in charge of themselves and that they ultimately make choices between right and wrong."

Such clarity of purpose and sense of system have earned David more than just a day-job at Vauxhall: He also heads the Math department, sits in a senior management team, and manages the school's database.

Aside from handling a typical class of 22 tots, David has been able to share his vision with fellow teachers and give colleagues "a pat on the back for a job well done" under the programs he had initiated. (He had apparently endeared himself to peers that his then head teacher once went with him for a vacation in the Philippines in 2005.)

Personalized training

Just early this month, to further upgrade his methods, David finished a short course dubbed "Future Leaders for Future Schools."

By his own account, David had helped improve the curriculum at Vauxhall, a state-funded primary school with a nursery, run by just around 25 teachers and staff, including mentors in French, Drama, Physical Education, and "special needs," as well as meal supervisors. Yearly enrollment is just around 240 pupils.

"I joined the school at a time when no clear systems existed (for teaching Math)," he recalled.

He remembered conducting a "subject audit," basically pinpointing what the children lacked in numerical skills. From there, he drew up new teaching programs, "making sure that it is not just another burden or a duplication of something that already exists."

He also helped devise systems to better chart the pupils' progress, as well as to help the poorer performers catch up. "I now have a very strong view of the importance of personalized learning," he said, citing a recent initiative in UK education dubbed "Every Child Matters."

Last year, for example, he had a class where 80 percent of the pupils were underperforming. "Upon identification of these children, I implemented a number of intervention programs (sort of remedial sessions) to address whatever gaps they have in their learning. At the end of the year, most of them made enormous progress that...my school showed the best results compared to 16 other schools in those same circumstances."

It was no small feat, considering Vauxhall's classification under the British education system.

"It could have been easy for me to teach in a private school or a church-maintained school in London, where neither resources nor pupil behavior is a problem," he explained.

Rewarding for soul

"But I chose to teach in a school where there is a very high level of deprivation. Almost 70 percent of the children in our school are on free meals—or belong to families receiving state benefits. Mobility (movement of children from one school to the other) and the percentage of children living with single parents are very high.'"

Here, he said, "is where I see the challenge: to be able to make a difference in the lives of these children... If that is not rewarding for the soul, then I don't know what is!"

But David didn't know either that his career would come to such inspired moments after some random Internet surfing in mid-2002. At the time, this Journalism graduate from the..University of Sto. Tomas was already a Master Teacher II in a high school in Tarlac, married to another teacher, the former Mayllah Reyes, and raising their first two of three children. (Today, their kids are aged 8, 5, and 2.)

"It was not a formal process," he recalled. "One day I was googling and I came across an agency called Protocol Teachers, which is based in Australia but facilitating teacher recruitment for the UK."

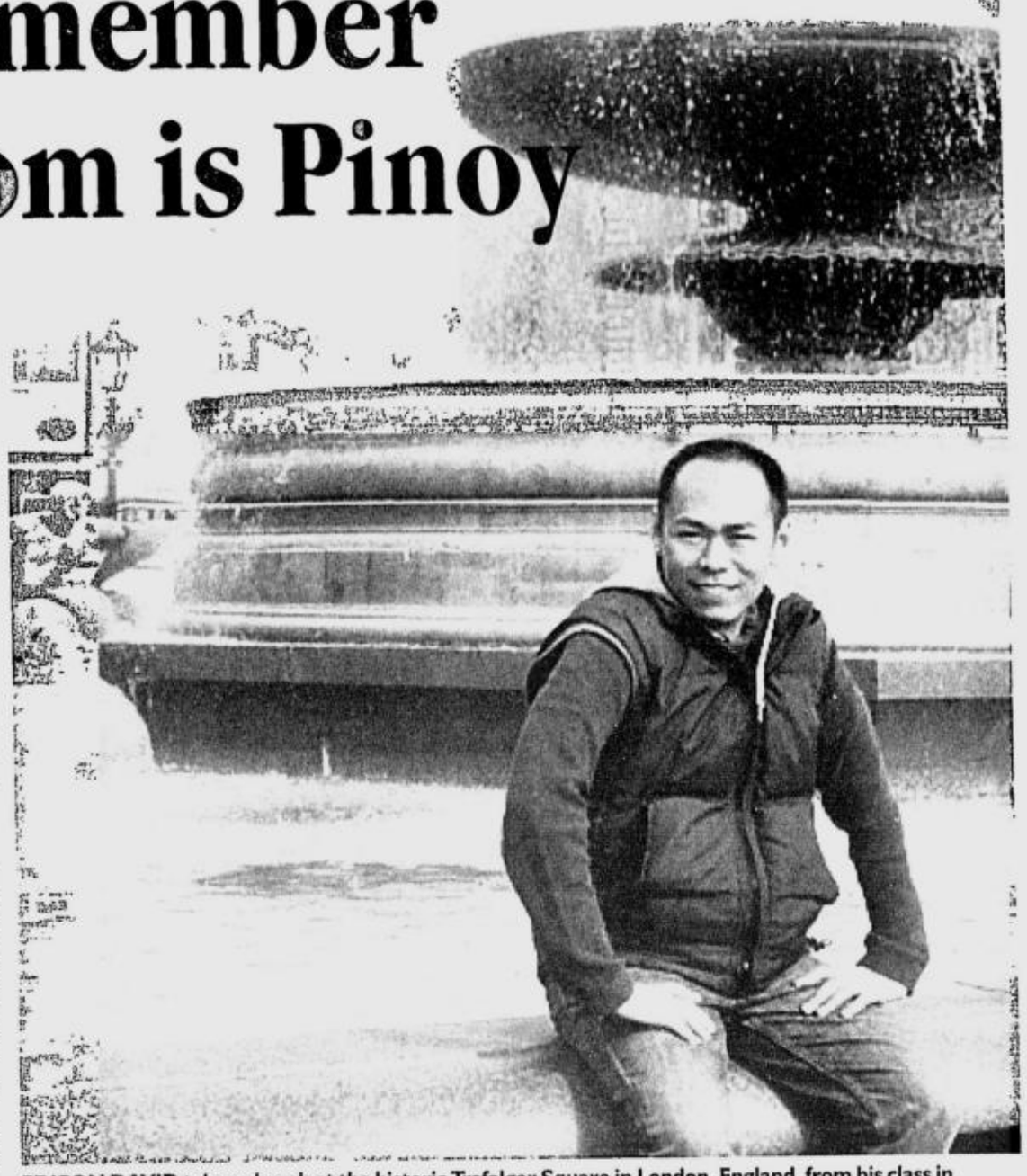
Industry in RP

He e-mailed one of the recruitment consultants and immediately received a response. "After a few more e-mails and a phone conversation, she agreed to look for a school for me. She found one after a couple of days and began processing my work permit."

The whole process took about a month. David arrived in London in July 2002 and started teaching in September that same year.

"No two ways about it," he smiled, when asked how financially rewarding his UK stint has been. Without giving figures, David said his one-month salary here is already "equivalent to what I used to earn in two years." He had since been investing his earnings in the Philippines, mainly in real estate both in Tarlac and Metro Manila.

"But over and above all that, I think the professional development that I have gained from teaching here is absolutely enormous. At the end of each day, I find myself assessing my own performance against the standards I've seen here and the standards I set for myself."



EDISON DAVID takes a break at the historic Trafalgar Square in London, England, from his class in Vauxhall, a public primary school for Britons, aged 3 to 11. He has learned to accept the differences between Filipino and English students.

Lessons I learned teaching in UK

By Edison David,
B.A., B.S.E., M.A.Ed.
Contributor

LONDON—TEACHING IS BOTH a gift and a curse. It is a gift because not anybody who wishes to teach can. It is a curse because once a person receives the call to teach, he has no choice but to heed it.

I started teaching at age 21. I was assigned in a public secondary school with a student roll of 1,100, tasked to teach English. It was when I actually started to teach that I realized it was indeed what I really wanted to do.

Philippine schools are different from English schools in many ways. First and foremost, while English schools are well equipped with teaching and learning resources, Philippine schools are not. It is not unusual to find schools with a textbook-students ratio of 1:10. Even basics like chairs and classrooms are scarce. It is this situation in the Philippines, which brings out the best in every teacher.

Scarcity teaches us how to improvise and innovate. The production of enhancement materials is crucial to ensure instructional success. Relying on government supplies is like waiting for the sun on a cold, winter night.

Behavior management

How is it to teach in the Philippines? It is basically the same anywhere in the world. The government provides schools with a national curriculum, a list of all skills and competencies desired to be achieved by every learner at the end of each year. Such a curriculum reflects the rationale of the whole educational system. The curriculum is the skeleton, the core of teaching. Each individual teacher provides for instructional flesh, by identifying tasks, methods and strategies that he/she deems relevant and appropriate in teaching each of the individual skills in the curriculum.

Likewise, behavior management plays a crucial role in ensuring instructional success in the Philippines. Maintaining and managing a class of 80 pupils is definitely a Herculean task. Because the Philippines is a multiethnic society, there is no one set of behavior management techniques that can be labelled as the most appropriate. The teacher, after a thorough analysis of his class composition, experiments and ultimately choose the behavior management technique he deems to be most appropriate for his class. Personally, I always see to it that any behavior management technique I apply conforms to these criteria: It must be helpful to the students, recognizing their rights as individuals, and it must be helpful to the learning environment.

How different is teaching in the Philippines from teaching in England? Curricular differences are almost unnoticeable.

Why I failed

Strategies are almost the same. Classroom structures are the same. behavior management techniques are universal. But the real difference lies in the learners themselves. Probably because of the economic difficulties in the Philippines, our learners give education a very high value, knowing that their future rely heavily on it. Thus, there is an initiative on every Filipino student to learn, to explore. Consequently, listening intently to the teacher follows.

What we have in the Philippines are "captured" learners with a very positive attitude towards school and teachers.

Behavioral problems, therefore, are more of exemptions, than rules.

I have come to England to teach, knowing that I am ready for anything. True enough, I did not find any difficulty with regards to coming to an understanding of the British curriculum. Having worked as a curriculum evaluator in the Philippines has helped me a lot in understanding the British curriculum.

I have also been quite successful in choosing the behavior management technique appropriate to the students assigned to me. But while the technique worked on my students, it definitely did not work for me. While I was able to maintain civility in my classroom, I saw my own civility going away. While I was able to maintain a certain degree of order in my lessons, I saw my own self, tearing apart. The two weeks I spent at that school were weeks of incessant headaches that I tried to remedy with Ibufrofens, paracatemols. And I finally decided to go. In retrospect, I dissected the experience, probed at every minute detail and found that I failed for the following reasons:

1. I was not given enough information as to the kind of behavior I will be dealing with. The head teacher used the word "difficult" to mean "extremely difficult." Students were impolite, rude, and disrespectful toward adults. It was only too late when I realized that they do that to everybody, that they did not specifically picked on me. It was not personal.

2. I had given up easily on my students, walking out on them before I finally won their trust. This was because aside from their behavior, some personal circumstances also aggravated the situation. I was living alone and I had no support system. Thus, I tended to view what seemed to be fairly normal student misbehavior as an extremely unforgivable offence.

Can a Filipino teacher survive in English schools?

Yes. But he has to learn a lot of things first. He must also have a support group so as not to feel displaced in a foreign country. He has to learn to accept the differences in perspectives and attitudes between Filipino and English students. I learned these things in a very bitter, extremely difficult way. But I did learn them. And for me, that is what's important.

Having survived four years teaching in inner-city schools has given me opportunities to be immersed in the day-to-day life of London vis-à-vis education.

Now a senior teacher

I am fortunate enough that I have been awarded Qualified Teacher Status by the General Teaching Council through the Teacher Training Agency's Overseas-Trained teacher Programme, with assessment only and exemption from induction. This means a lot to me for it somehow recognizes our abilities and qualifications as Filipino professionals. It means that home qualifications are recognized without the need for further training. I am now a Senior Teacher and such a position gives me avenues to dissect educational policies and actively participate in implementing them in the school level. Teaching in London has been a truly productive experience for me. And, yes, I am still learning. Every day is a new day. Every day is a fresh page. And to borrow TTA's campaign line: Use your head, teach!

Editor's note: This article is reprinted from ukpinoy.com with permission from the author.

AT HOME in the company of his English-speaking pupils, but David says one needs a support group so as not to feel displaced in a foreign country.

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

FBI admits breaking law to spy on citizens

WASHINGTON—THE FBI ON FRIDAY ACKNOWLEDGED that it had breached US privacy rules in seeking access to individual telephone, email and financial records to help investigate suspected terror cases.

FBI director Robert Mueller endorsed a report by the Justice Department's inspector general that he said identified "serious deficiencies" in procedures used to supervise requests for sensitive private information.

"We—and I speak for the FBI as an institution—accept the report's findings and its recommendations and have already taken steps to address many of these recommendations," Mueller told a news conference.

He was referring to the FBI's use of "national security letters" filed to justify requests for certain types of information on private citizens such as long-distance phone records or subscriptions to publications.

The Justice Department audit found a total of 22 breaches of internal Federal Bureau of Investigation and Justice Department internal guidelines on obtaining such records.

The USA Patriot Act passed after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks made it easier for the FBI to obtain national security letters by dropping a requirement to show specific links between the records sought and terrorism.

But the inspector general's report said FBI agents continued to use the letters without citing an authorized investigation or providing the required documentation.

Mueller described the information garnered from the letters as "critical building blocks in our counterterrorism and counterintelligence investigations" and said he was concerned by the report's findings of abuses.

FBI DIRECTOR Robert Mueller AFP

"We've already taken steps to correct these deficiencies," Mueller said, adding the FBI had bolstered internal checks on data collections and beefed up training for agents.

According to the Washington Post on Friday the FBI issued more than 19,000 such letters in 2005, amounting to 47,000 separate requests for information.

The report, which was mandated by Congress over the objections of President George W. Bush's administration, prompted angry reaction from lawmakers and civil liberties activists after it was presented in Congress on Friday.

"The Justice Department's own investigation, which is now concluded, confirms the American people's worst fears about the Patriot Act," said Democratic Party Senator Dick Durbin, the Senate majority whip.

"It appears that the administration has used these powers without even the most basic regard for the privacy of innocent Americans." Attorney General Alberto Gonzales agreed in a letter to the inspector general that the national security letters were "vital investigative tools and are critical to our efforts to fight and win the war on terror." But although there were no allegations of misconduct by FBI officers, Gonzales told the FBI director such mistakes would not be tolerated and "has ordered the FBI and the department to restore accountability," his office said in a statement.

Gonzales also said the FBI had "to put in place safeguards to ensure greater oversight and controls over the use of national security letters."

Such letters are used "to tie together the various threads of the life of a suspected terrorist, where he lives, who his friends are, what phone numbers he is calling most often," he told a forum of privacy professionals on Friday. *AFP*

CHIRAC AFP

Chirac to announce retirement

PARIS—PRESIDENT JACQUES Chirac is expected to announce Sunday that he will retire after more than 40 years at the top in French politics.

The 74-year-old leader is to reveal in an address to the nation on radio and television whether he will stand in the presidential election to be held in six weeks.

The content of his declaration has been kept secret by the Elysee palace, but the near universal consensus was that he will explain why he has decided not to seek an unprecedented third mandate.

With official nominations for the race due by next Friday, Chirac has kept open till the last moment the option of running again—despite polls that show he would have no chance of winning again.

But in recent weeks he has given several hints that he intends to step down, telling a television interviewer last month that "there is life after politics" and that he hopes to serve France "in another capacity." The president has also hosted three international meetings on issues known to be close to his heart—Lebanon, the environment and French-African relations—and this week he attended what was widely seen as his farewell EU summit.

If there was little suspense about Chirac's decision, speculation centered on whether he will use the broadcast to endorse the right-wing candidate for the presidency Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy, a former protege who heads the ruling Union for a Popular Movement (UMP).

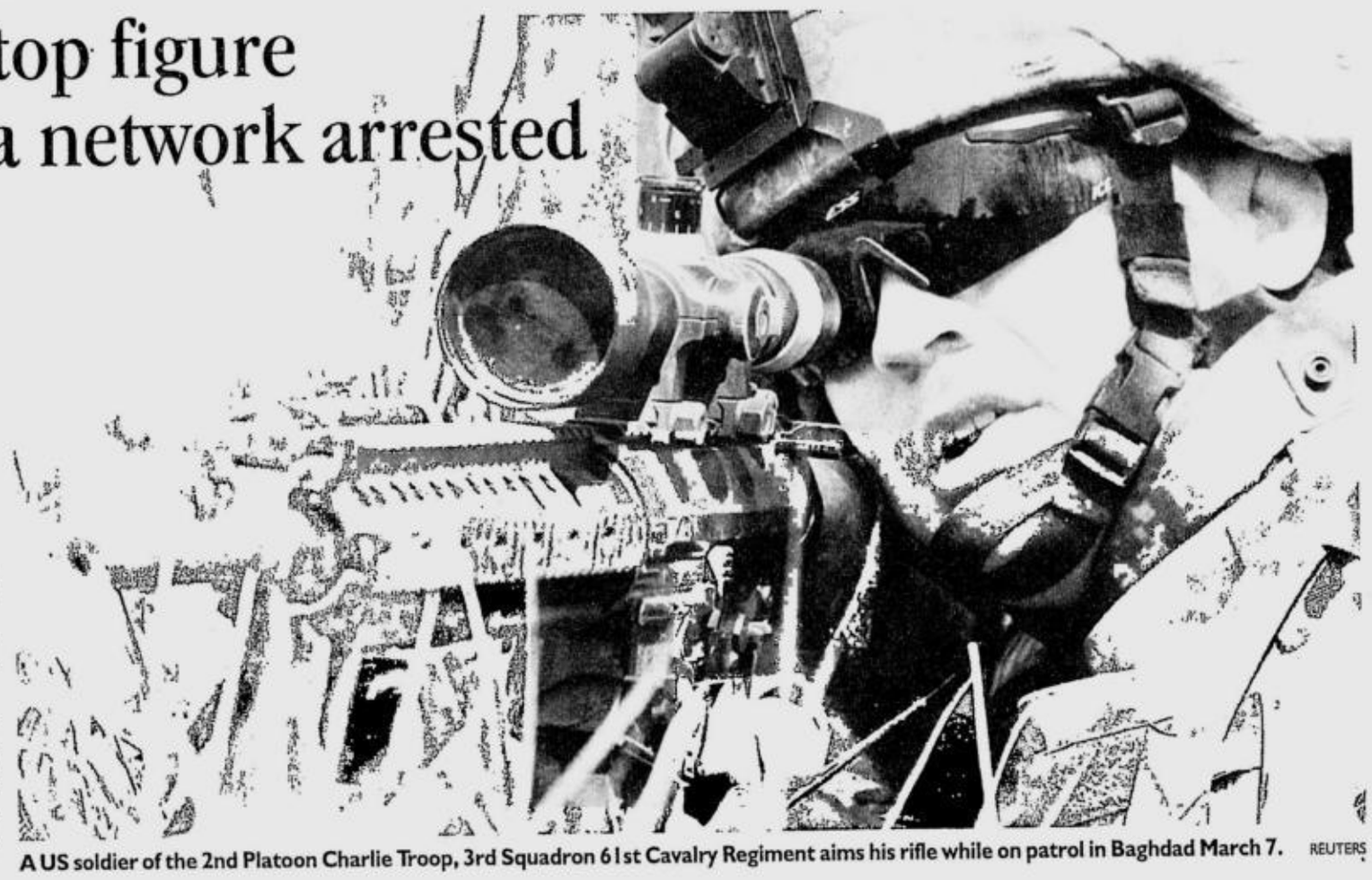
Sarkozy, 52, has a narrow lead in the polls over the socialist Segolene Royal but now faces a new challenge from the centrist candidate Francois Bayrou, head of the Union for French Democracy (UDF), whose ratings have surged in the last month.

Chirac and Sarkozy—whose relations have long been tense—had talks last week, and Sarkozy said he was informed what the president plans to say in his broadcast.

Speaking on France 2 television, the UMP leader said Chirac's public backing "would have a certain weight among some French people who are still uncertain (how to vote)." However party insiders said they do not expect the president to make an explicit statement of support.

Chirac's announcement was expected to unleash a flood of tributes from politicians and the public. While misgivings remain about his legacy after 12 years as president, he commands widespread affection and even political opponents praise his defense of French interests in the world. *AFP*

Iraqis say top figure in al-Qaida network arrested



A US soldier of the 2nd Platoon Charlie Troop, 3rd Squadron 61st Cavalry Regiment aims his rifle while on patrol in Baghdad March 7. REUTERS

BAGHDAD—IRAQI OFFICIALS said Saturday they were holding a top al-Qaida official, but not the terror mastermind Abu Omar al-Baghdadi who they believed was captured a day earlier.

"After preliminary investigations, it was proven that the arrested al-Qaida person is not Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, but, in fact, another important al-Qaida official," said Brig. Gen. Qassim al-Mousawi, an Iraqi military spokesperson.

"Interrogations and investigations are still under way to get more information," he said.

It was al-Mousawi who announced late Friday that al-Baghdadi had been captured.

A senior adviser to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki also told The Associated Press that al-Baghdadi had been taken into custody. The adviser spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to release the information.

The reported arrest followed rumors this week that al-Baghdadi's brother had been arrested in a raid near Tikrit.

Almost nothing is known of al-Baghdadi, including his real name and what he looks like, and his capture would be difficult for officials to verify.

The man was captured Friday along with several other insurgents in a raid on the western outskirts of Baghdad, officials said.

Al-Mousawi said the suspect at first identified himself as al-Baghdadi, and that his identity was also corroborated by another man captured with him.

Al-Baghdadi is believed to lead the shadowy Islamic State of Iraq, an al-Qaida-inspired group that challenged the authority of Iraq's elected government. He has also signed militant messaged posted online, as the leader of the Mujahedeen Shura Council—an umbrella group that includes al-Qaida in Iraq.

US officials in Baghdad said they were looking into the arrest but could not confirm the suspect's identity. In Washington, Defense Department spokesperson Bryan Whitman said Pentagon officials had received no official confirmation that al-Baghdadi was captured.

US and Iraqi forces have increasingly focused on al-Baghdadi's group in their fight against Sunni insurgents, especially the hardcore religious extremists who have shown no interest in negotiating an end to their struggle.

But some analysts have pointed out that the al-Qaida-linked extremists rebounded following the death last June of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the charismatic al-Qaida in Iraq leader who died in a US airstrike in Diyala province. *AP*

EU challenges world with climate change plan

BRUSSELS—EUROPEAN UNION leaders resolved on Friday to slash greenhouse gas emissions and switch to renewable fuels, challenging the world to follow its lead in fighting climate change.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said the bloc's "ambitious and credible" decisions, including a binding target for renewable sources to make up a fifth of EU energy use by 2020, put it in the vanguard of the battle against global warming.

"We can avoid what could well be a human calamity," she said after chairing a two-day summit, stressing the 27-nation EU had opened an area of cooperation unthinkable a couple of years ago.

European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso told reporters: "We can say to the rest of the world, Europe is taking the lead. You should join us fighting climate change."

The EU package set targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions blamed for global warming, developing renewable energy sources, boosting energy efficiency and using biofuels.

In a move that will affect all of the bloc's 490 million citizens, the leaders called for energy-saving lighting to be required in homes, offices and streets by the end of the decade.

Barroso argues Europe can gain a "first mover" economic advantage by investing in green technology but businesses are concerned they could foot a huge bill and lose competitiveness to dirtier but cheaper foreign rivals.

The deal laid down Europe-wide goals for cutting carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions and developing renewable sources but national targets will require the consent of member states, presaging years of wrangling between Brussels and governments.

Merkel scored a diplomatic victory by securing agreement to set a legally binding target for renewable fuels such as solar, wind and hydroelectric power—the most contentious issue.

Leaders accepted the 20 percent target for renewable sources in return for flexibility on each country's contribution.

The United Nations, which has coordinated global efforts to tackle climate change, applauded the plan.

"In the face of rising greenhouse gas emissions, committing to a substantial decrease for the next decade is ambitious," deputy UN spokesperson Marie Okabe said. "But ambition and leadership are just what is needed to respond to climate change, one of the greatest challenges facing humankind."

"These are a set of groundbreaking, bold, ambitious targets for the European Union," British Prime Minister Tony Blair said.

"They require an immense amount of work for Europe to secure this but ... it gives Europe a very clear leadership position on this crucial issue facing the world," he told reporters.

By pledging to respect national energy mixes and potentials, the summit statement satisfied countries reliant on nuclear energy, such as France, or coal, such as Poland, and small countries with few energy resources, such as Cyprus and Malta.

The leaders committed to a target of reducing EU greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent by 2020 and offered to go to 30 percent if major nations such as the United States, Russia, China and India follow suit.

The statement also set a 10 percent target for biofuels in transport by 2020 to be implemented in a cost-efficient way. *Reuters*

PHOTO taken June 4, 1998 shows then House Speaker Newt Gingrich (right) conferring with US President Bill Clinton.Gingrich, a potential Republican presidential candidate in 2008, confessed to cheating on his wife at about the same time Clinton was being impeached over his affair with Monica Lewinsky. AFP

Ex-US speaker admits affair while blasting Bill over Monica

WASHINGTON—REPUBLICAN NEWT GINGrich, who led the US House of Representatives as it prepared to impeach Bill Clinton in a sex-and-perjury scandal, acknowledged in an interview released on Friday that he was having an affair at the time.

Gingrich, a potential 2008 presidential candidate, was asked by James Dobson of the conservative Christian group Focus on the Family, whether he was engaged in an extramarital affair when former President Clinton was involved with White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

"The honest answer is 'yes,'" Gingrich said in an interview released on the group's web site. "But it's not related to what happened." The affair has been widely reported previously.

Referring to his efforts as House speaker to oust Clinton, a Democrat, Gingrich said he was not judging the president personally.

"I drew a line in my mind that said even though I run the risk of being deeply embarrassed, and even though at a purely personal level I am not rendering judgment on another human being, as a leader of the government trying to uphold the rule of law, I have no choice except to move forward and say that you cannot accept felonies and you cannot accept perjury in your highest officials," Gingrich said.

Gingrich stepped down as speaker and quit Congress in 1998 amid ethics allegations and Republican losses in midterm elections.

Although the House impeached Clinton in December of that year for perjury and obstruction of justice, he was acquitted two months later in a Senate trial.

Gingrich has been married three times. In an often-told story, he discussed divorce details with his first wife, Jacqueline, while she was recovering from cancer surgery.

In 1981, he married Marianne Ginther, and they were divorced in 2000. Later that year he married a young congressional aide, Callista Bisek. *Reuters*

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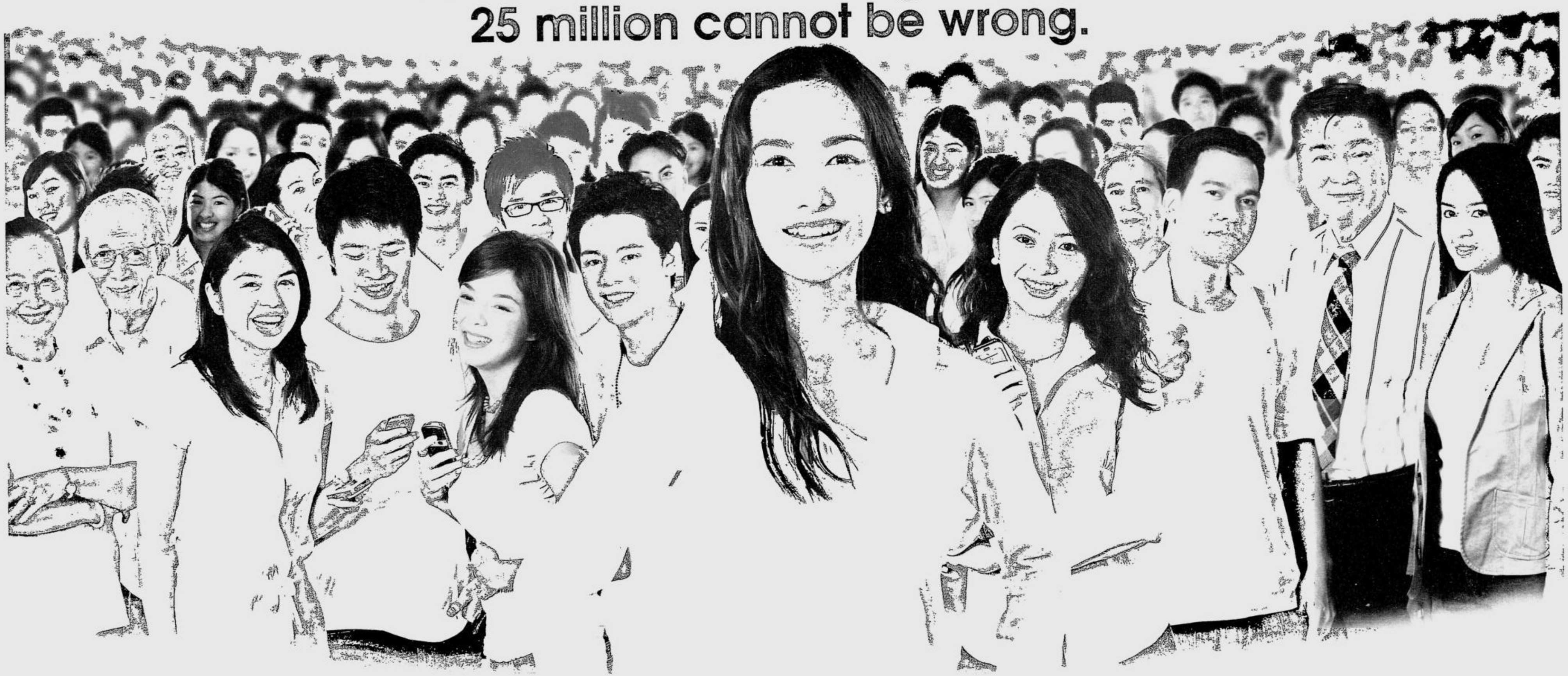

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PUREFOODS swingman James Yap puts up a shot against Coca-Cola forward Ali Peek in their game Friday night. Despite Yap's prolific performances, the Giants are currently without a win to show in two games. ROMY HOMILLADA

Ginebra debuts vs Alaska with Hatfield in tow

BARANGAY GINEBRA MAKES ITS MUCH-awaited PBA Fiesta Cup debut today and the Gin Kings won't look half as bad as they thought they would with Rudy Hatfield returning to the roster.

The workmanlike forward formally begged off from joining the National Team and will thus return when the Kings, the reigning Philippine Cup champs, take the Araneta Coliseum floor against Alaska at 6:35 p.m.

Efforts to move his wedding to fiancée Brittany Herr scheduled in Ireland in August fell apart. The wedding and its preparations will conflict with the Fiba-Asia tournament in Japan.

Hatfield's RP Team replacement will come from among Rommel Adducul of San Miguel, Ginebra's Rafi Reavis and Enrico Villanueva of Red Bull.

This would be a welcome development of sorts for the Kings, as they can avoid being in the same predicament two other powerhouse teams who lent their cores to the RP Team are in right now.

The Aces will actually be gunning for a piece of the early lead even as newcomer Welcoat and Sta. Lucia try to barge into the win column when they clash in the 4:05 p.m. contest.

Both the Dragons and the Realtors will be coming off sorry losses, with Welcoat on the receiving end of an 81-79 loss to Coca-Cola and the Realtors, labeled as the favorites here after being left untouched by the RP Team, bowing to Air21 on Wednesday.

"Ginebra will be a pretty tough team with Hatfield back," coach Tim Cone of Alaska said.

Also of importance to the Ginebra roster is how Rod Nealy will play against the veteran Rosell Ellis.

Eric Menk is also tipped to play a vital role, though the Kings would have to find ways to plug the scoring vacuum that Jay-Jay Helterbrand and Mark Caguioa have left for them in this tournament.

Caguioa was the leading scorer in the Philippine Cup with an average of close to 24 a night, while Helterbrand was the top assist man.

Johnny Abarrientos, the 1996 MVP during Alaska's Grand Slam year, will be left with most of the quarterbacking chores with Helterbrand out.

Musong R. Castillo

STANDINGS	W	L
Red Bull	2	0
Coca-Cola	2	0
Alaska	1	0
Air21	1	0
Talk 'N Text	0	1
Welcoat	0	1
Sta. Lucia	0	1
San Miguel	0	1
Purefoods	0	2
Ginebra	X	X

GAMES TODAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:05 p.m.—Welcoat vs Sta. Lucia
6:35 p.m.—Alaska vs Barangay Ginebra

The Kings get their rings

REIGNING PHILIPPINE CUP CHAMPION Barangay Ginebra becomes the first ever team to receive a PBA championship ring when the Kings are honored in a simple awards ceremony in between tonight's Talk 'N Text-Fiesta Cup doubleheader at the Araneta Coliseum.

Commissioner Noli Eala will personally hand out the championship rings to players and coaching staff of the league's most popular ballclub.

This marks the first time the PBA is giving out title rings to a champion ballclub, although teams normally give their players rings for every All-Filipino title won.

The Kings beat the San Miguel Beermen in the Philippine Cup finals, 4-2, in a thrilling best-of-seven series that saw Ginebra climb out of a 0-2 hole.

"The awarding of the championship ring is another practice the PBA would like to institutionalize from hereon," said Eala.

■ **Baguio storms forward** /A22

■ **Sixers triumph** /A23

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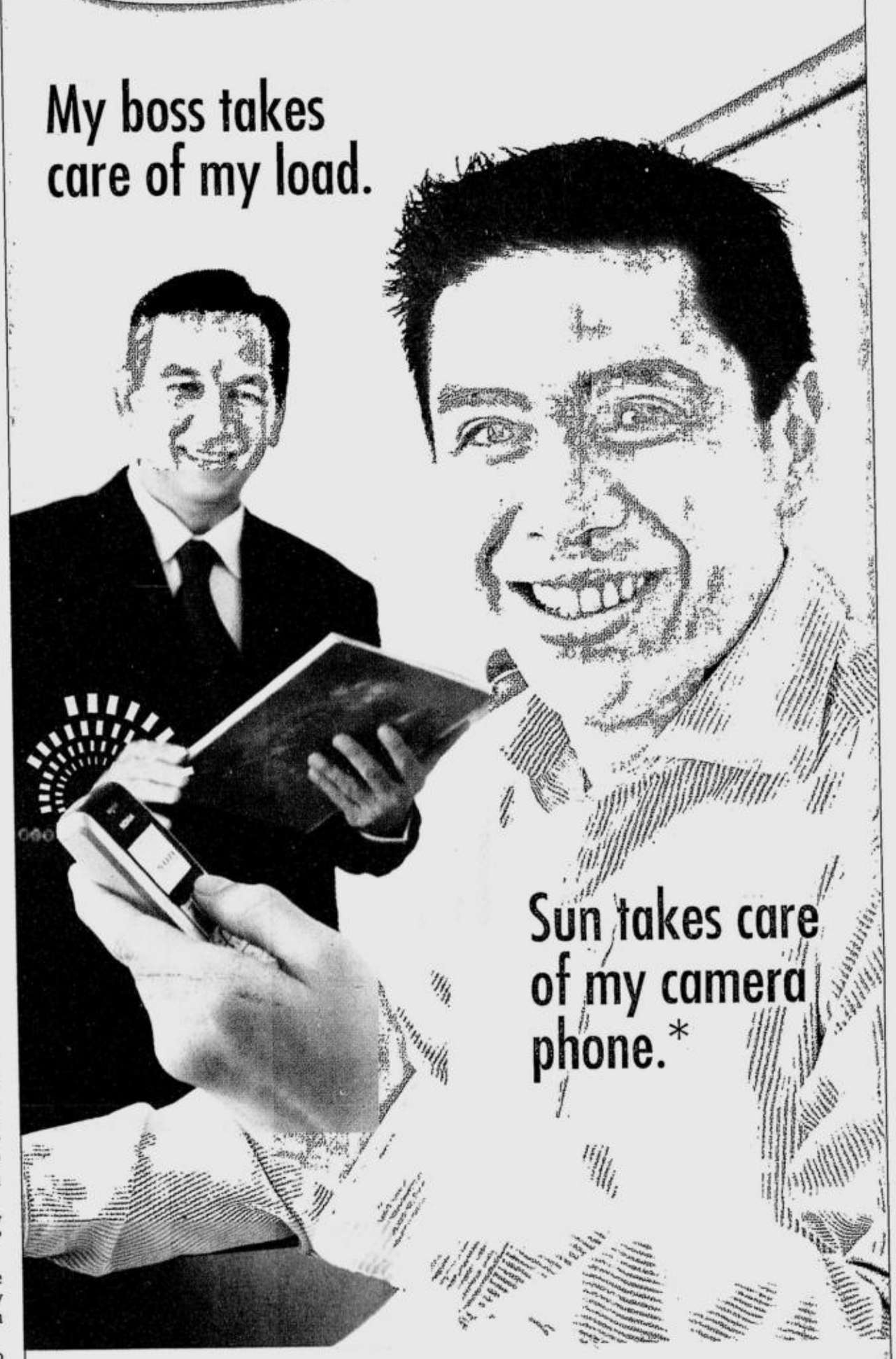

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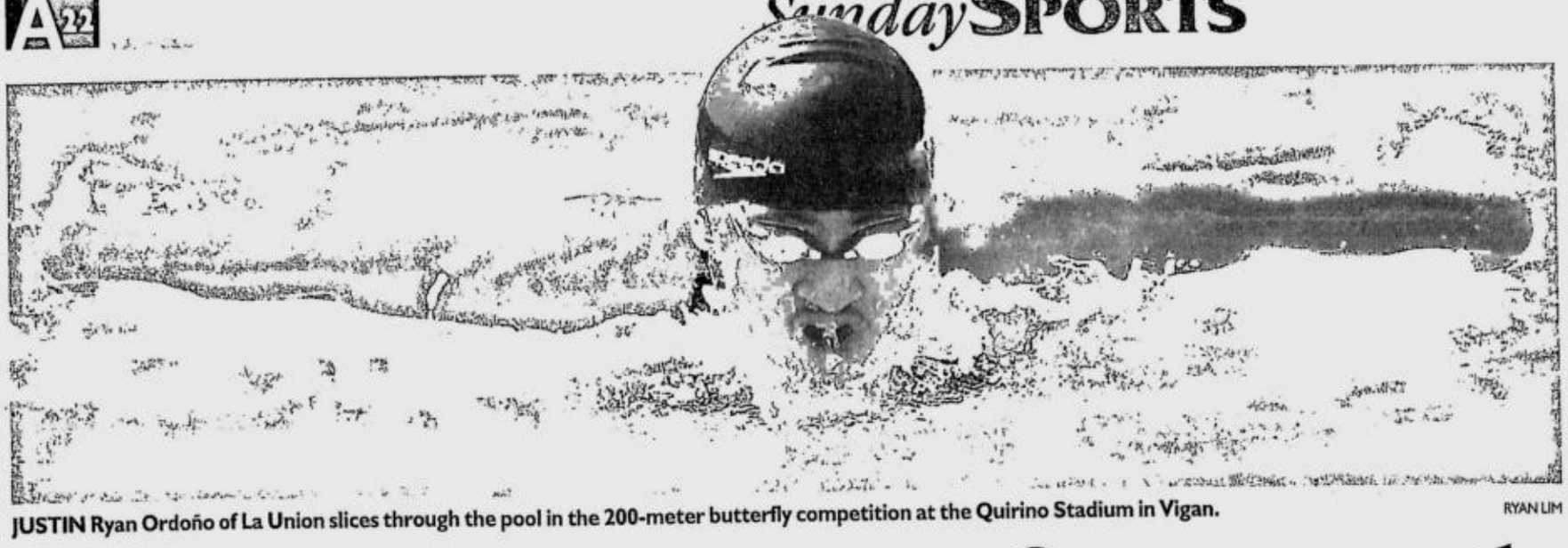


JUSTIN Ryan Ordoño of La Union slices through the pool in the 200-meter butterfly competition at the Quirino Stadium in Vigan. RYAN LIM

Baguio storms forward

Pine City bets corner half of day's gold-medal haul

By June Navarro

VIGAN, ILOCOS SUR—BAGUIO CITY found a gold mine in three contact sports and archery a day after lording it over in arnis to slowly pull away on the penultimate day of competitions in the Philippine Olympic Festival here.

Judo proved to be the richest source of medals for Baguio City yesterday with its judokas accounting for half of the 26 gold medals they captured for the day in four disciplines.

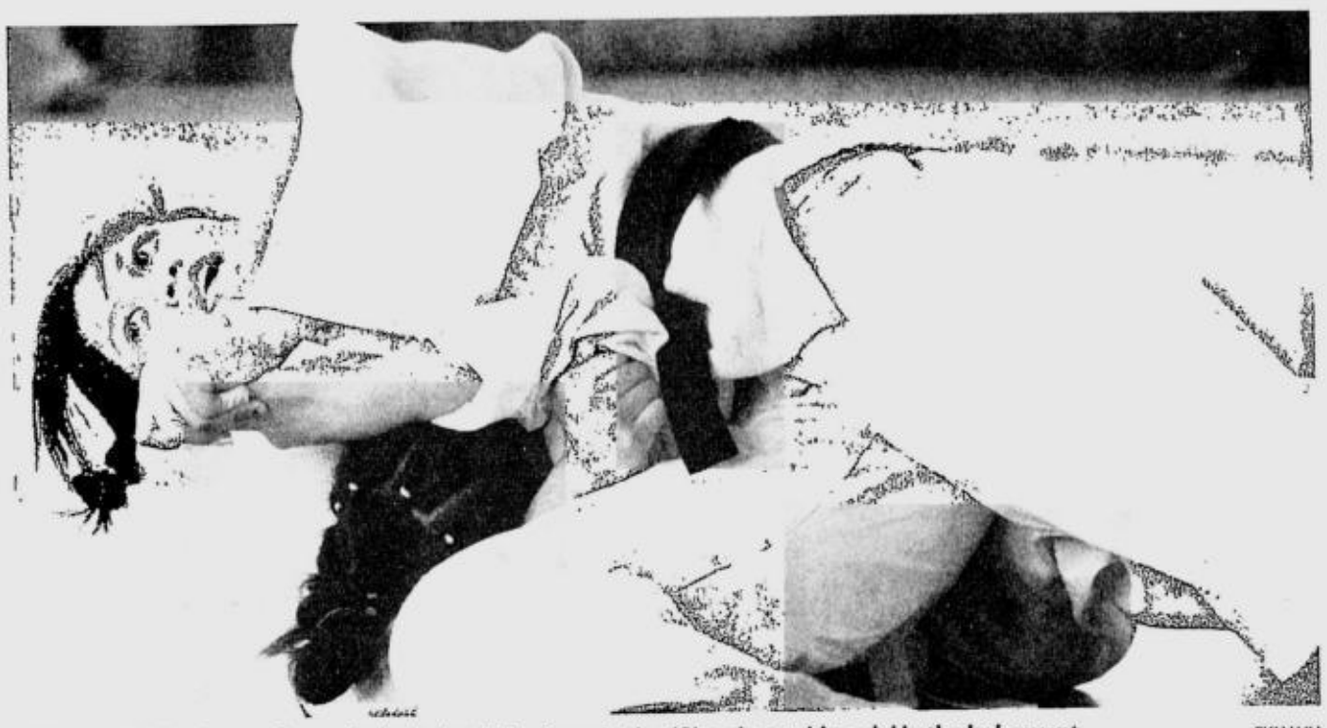
Of the 15 golds at stake in judo, the Pine City bets carted away 13 as Karl Banganan (-90kg), Julio Elias De Lenio (+100kg), Saldon Caoile (-81kg), Brenth Bilalat (-66kg), Jerome Cayatog (-60kg), Francis Dave Rillera (-55kg) and Clarence Onanat (-52kg) came out superior in their weight categories.

Veronica Llantada (-70kg), Olivia Lapurga (-74kg), Jhona Dew-alan (-78kg), Annie Carmel Comising (-63kg), Johana Taynan (-57kg) and Illy Glacia Cudao (-46kg) also shone for Baguio City on the distaff side of the judo competitions.

Only Benguet's Ariane Cawed (women's -45kg) and Elfred Ablasa (men's -73kg) slipped through Baguio's medal dragnet

With gold medals in wrestling, muay thai and archery pouring in apart from judo, Baguio City surged to 54 gold medals on top of 42 silvers and 33 bronzes going into the final day of the games.

Baguio's collection provided enough cushion for the exploits of La Union and Pangasinan in the pool later in the day.



ILLY GLACIA Cudao performs the lock that helps her win the 48kg-class gold medal in the Judo event. RYAN LIM

Arabelle Maron and Paula Ordono picked up three medals each for La Union in the girls' 200-meter individual medley, 100-meter backstroke and 50-meter freestyle for 13-14 years old and 11-12 years, respectively.

Golden efforts from Kristopher Witt (11-12 200-meter backstroke, 50-meter freestyle), Alvin Dyquiangco (11-12 200m butterfly, 200m individual medley) and Marc Artemius Paderon (10-under 100m backstroke) also contributed to La Union's 10 golds in swimming.

Pangasinan had five golds in the pool to increase its tally to 25-14-16.

Luis Mariano Verzosa struck three golds for the Pangasinense in the 15 and over age bracket (100m freestyle, 100m backstroke, 200m Individual medley) while Alyana Ingrid Garcia took 100m backstroke for girls' 11-12 and Maria Cresencia Verzosa (girls' 11-12) the 800m freestyle.

Muay actually set the pace for Baguio's gold-medal rampage after Jay Olod (57-60 kgs), Johnny Bitaga (60-63.5 kgs), Jason Sanwangin (45-48 kgs), Alvin Velasco (48-51 kgs) and Clint Annawe (51-54 kgs) downed the opposition in their respective events.

Down south, politics delays POF

BACOLOD CITY—WHILE NORTHERN Luzon's top athletes are getting badly-needed exposure with the staging of the Philippine Olympic Festival qualifiers in Vigan, the same could not be said for the standouts in the Visayas.

Problems with politics and funding have forced the provincial government of Antique to reschedule the Visayas leg of the POF supposed to be held in January in San Jose, Antique.

In a letter to POF organizing committee chair Robert Aventajado, Antique Gov. Sally Zaldivar-Perez said she decided to postpone the event because Antique Rep. Exequiel Javier has declared that he will not support the multi-event competition, aimed at searching for possible candidates to the Philippine Team.

"More than the problem posed by lack of funds, I feel that politics will definitely rear its ugly head caused by the public pronouncements of Javier vehemently opposing the multi-sport event," she said.

The objective of fostering unity through the POF might only create more divisiveness in an already polarized political situation in Antique if it will push through, she added.

Perez claimed that Javier, who is believed to be her rival in the political arena, has also declared that he will withhold any aid or financial assistance for the POF Visayas qualifiers.

Aventajado said that the Visayas qualifiers will be held either on July or August.

Hopefully, the funds will be sufficient and the political environment will be conducive for staging the event in the near future so that it could be held on either July or August, Perez said. *Cedelf Tupas, Inquirer Visayas*

Foreigners dominate President's Cup regatta

By Jasmine W. Payo

FOREIGN YACHTS SAILED TO THE TOP leaving little room for local boats on the final day of the 15th President's Cup Regatta yesterday in Boracay, Aklan.

Jelik, owned and skippered by Hong Kong tycoon Frank Pong, streaked ahead in four of six inshore races to capture the overall crown in the IRC Racing Class.

Allan Burrell's Sandoway, sailed by a Dutch team led by Klaus Huisjes, swept the last three races to rule the IRC 1 Class.

China Rose dominated the PY Cruising Class after breezing through three of four events behind Rainer Blum.

Top Philippine bet Centennial looked poised to defend its IRC Racing championship after topping the Oakley Race on Day 2 and finishing second in the tournament opener American Express Race.

But Centennial, a Sydney 46 owned and skippered by Ernesto "Judes" Echauz, slid behind Jelik in the Asia Pacific Boating Race and fell to third in the last three competitions—the Smart Infinity, Fairways and Bluewater and Seair races.

In the four-day event, competing yachts located marked buoys in the pristine waters of Boracay and other neighboring islands. The racers' corrected time, which was based on the race time and the boat's handicap, determined the final ranking.

The overall title in each class was awarded to the yacht with the highest cumulative score in the six inshore races.

Pong, a former commodore of the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club, steered the 75-foot Reichel/Pugh ahead of the nine-boat field in at least one event on each racing day.

Li'l Kim ready to conquer triathlon

By Jasmine W. Payo

HER PARENTS ARE NO ATHLETES.

That's why Kim Mangrobang, a national junior triathlete, still feels unsure where she got her sporty spirit.

"No one even runs in our family," said the lanky 15-year-old.

Still, the Mangrobangs gave in to their eldest daughter's sports dreams even if an unsuccessful shot at taekwondo confirmed the family's initial claim that the athletic gene simply doesn't run in their blood.

Eight summers ago, a precocious Mangrobang discovered the thrill of taekwondo's high-flying kicks and powerful strikes. Her moves, however, appeared awkward and Mangrobang ended up as a young martial arts reject.

"I just didn't excel," she said. "I don't know why. I thought maybe because there was just no athlete in the family."

Despite the failed attempt, Mangrobang continued to feed her athletic drive by plunging into pool action months later.

"I started swimming [when I was] nine in our [Physical Education] class," she said. "Our coach said that I have the talent in swimming. And when I tried out in our varsity team, I got in."

The swift, but underweight pre-pubescent began starring in local swim meets until she got the attention of triathlon national coach Abet Alon-alon.

"They said I'm thin, that's why I'm good," Mangrobang said. "When coach Abet said I should try triathlon, I said okay even if I didn't know anything about it."

At 10, Mangrobang tried the aquathlon, a run-swim-run event, but hardly made a ripple in her first competition.

"I finished second to the last," she recalled, laughing.

Two years later, coaches deemed Mangrobang ready for the sprint races in triathlon.

"Coach Abet really pushed me," she said. "But I was still surprised that I finished second in my first race."

And there was no stopping her since then as Mangrobang dominated the national junior races in the last three years. In 2006, she started crashing in the top five and the top 15 of junior races abroad.

"I enjoy triathlon because it's fast-paced," she noted. "I'm really focused to do my best. I've been training the whole-year round."

Mangrobang, though, makes sure she balances her sport and studies at the Dominican College in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, where she's a third year high school student.

"I get average grades, but my favorite is trigo (trigonometry)," she said.

Still, many are surprised where the 5-foot-1, 80-pound triathlete gets her stamina.

"It's funny when my classmates ask me how I do it, how I can compete in three sports one after the other," she said.

It's a wonder indeed, especially for someone who got rejected trying out just one sport.

2 share lead; Minoza 7 off

SINGAPORE—BRITIAN'S GARY LOCKERBIE and China's Liang Wen-chong moved into a share of the lead on 12-under-par after the third round of the Singapore Masters on Saturday.

Frankie Minoza was the best placed Filipino following another 71 for 211, seven shots off the pace.

Tony Lascuna was a shot back following a 71 while Gerald Rosales was at 213 after a 72. Angelo Que skied to an 80 and was way off at 204.

Liang, who led after the first round, birdied the 18th for a four-under 68 to join Lockerbie one stroke clear of the field at the Laguna National Golf Club after the burly Englishman had bogeyed the last to complete his three-under 69.

Overnight leader Jyoti Randhawa of India stands alone in third place on 11-under, with Malaysia's Iain Steel and Ireland's Peter Lawrie a further shot adrift in a tie for fourth.

Thailand's Thongchai Jaidee and Britain's Simon Dyson share sixth place on nine-under at the $1.1 million European and Asian Tour event. *Reuters*

Hopes up for Pinoy SEA Games gold mine

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WUSHU, THE COUNTRY'S BEST BET for a big gold-medal haul in the Southeast Asian Games, is expected to get enough support to earn additional events when the biennial tournament is held in Thailand this December.

The sports discipline which brought the most number of gold medals during the 2005 SEAG is being pushed to have more than 12 events this year, boosting the Philippines' chances of repeating as overall champ in the event.

Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar have also expressed their desire to have at least 18 wushu events this SEAG, according to wushu president Julian Camacho.

During the 2005 SEAG, wushu had 22 events with the Philippines snaring the gold in 11 of them on top of four silvers and two bronzes.

The sport's mighty showing in the 2005 SEAG was followed up with a one-gold, one-silver performance during the Doha Asian Games last year through gold winner Rene Catalan and silver medalist Eduard Folayang.

"We hope to get more events when the SEA Games Federation Council is held in April," said Camacho, who is also co-chair of the SEAG Task Force, which is in charge of the preparation for this year's edition.

Aside from wushu, dragonboat is also hoping to get more events as well as gymnastics.

"I don't have the numbers right now but the events taken out (of those sports) were happen to be our stronghold," added Camacho.

Dragonboat swept six gold medals during the Manila SEAG. But only three events were approved so far by the Thais.

Sta. Ana race honors jockey academy founder

TWELVE CRACK IMPORTED CHARGERS take the Santa Ana track today for the 2007 Challenge Run Series' first leg to be held in honor of George Stribbling, the father of the Philippine Jockeys' Academy (PJA).

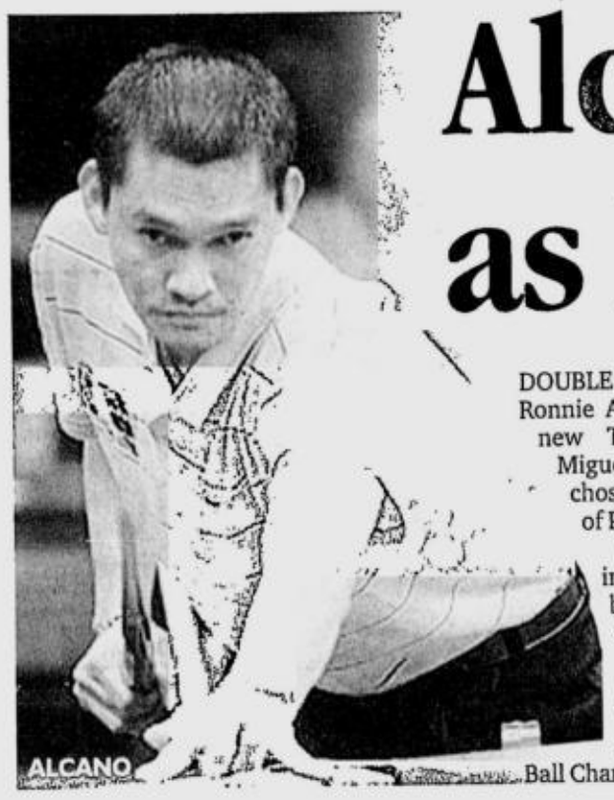
Bullet Day and Rain Dancer loom as the prohibitive picks in the 1,500-meter race that offers P200,000 to the winner.

All the riders in the event are graduates of the jockey academy.

The hard-finishing Bullet Day, a three-year-old filly by Bite the Bullet out of Hardly Normal will be skippered by Jessie B. Guce, while John Cordero reins in Rain Dancer.

Expected to crowd out the early picks are coupled Couplers Affirmed Queen and Out of Sight, China Doll, Phil's Game, Aly Dancer, Beautiful Pet, Mercurio, Midnight King and another coupled entry, Jaded Dancer and Fantastic Find. Bullet Day and Rain Dancer are both seeking followup victories to separate romps last week.

The race is being held in honor of Stribbling, who turns 90 on March 20. He started the PJA in 1980 and has not left the country since, helping the industry produce such top caliber riders like Manolito Daquis, Lyndon Guce, Patti Dilema, and Jonathan Hernandez, among others. *Musong Castillo*


ALCANO

Alcano gets Innova as P'foods endorser

DOUBLE WORLD CHAMPION Ronnie Alcano will receive a brand new Toyota Innova from San Miguel Corporation after being chosen as new official endorser of Purefoods Hotdog.

A press conference regarding the endorsement deal will be held tomorrow at the SMC offices in Ortigas, Pasig.

Though Alcano, winner of the 2006 World 9-Ball Championship in Manila and the just concluded World 8-Ball Championship in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates, is also an endorser of Guinness Beer, his manager Perry Mariano of Bugsy Promotion sees no problem as Purefoods is not a direct competitor of the Irish stout beer.

"It's (endorsement) okay, because Purefoods makes hotdogs and not beer," said Mariano. "Ronnie can put the patches of Purefoods when he's playing, even in the Asian 9-Ball Tour."

Guinness Beer is the new major title sponsor of the Asian 9-Ball Tour, replacing San Miguel Beer.

The Asian Tour, serving as a qualifier for this year's World Pool Championships in Manila in November, kicks off on April 20 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The 34-year-old Alcano, lanky cue artist from Calamba, Laguna, is scheduled to arrive this afternoon from Fujairah, where he bested compatriot and stablemate Dennis Orcollo for the World 8-Ball title and the $25,000 (P1.2 million) that goes with it.

Arriving with Alcano, are Efren "Bata" Reyes, and Francisco "Django" Bustamante, who made the round of 16 and 32, respectively in Fujairah.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

Why Yap's out of national five

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

OVER RADIO DZME's "Usapang Sports" yesterday, a caller posed a question which I could not answer.

"Do you know why James Yap was not included in Chot Reyes' national team? That's tantamount to a big slap in the face, considering that he was last year's Most Valuable Player. Do you think it might have something to do with his current personal problem?," the caller asked.

Actually it was an issue that I had been mulling about, just like him.

I told the caller that I didn't know the answer, but that I didn't think it had anything to do with James' marital troubles.

"*Masikip na kasi sa position na yun*," suggested studio guest Teddy Reynoso. "*Nandun na si* Mark (Caguioa), JayJay (Helterbrand) and RenRen (Ritualo). No room left for James."

Well maybe so.

"Are you trying to say that James is not as good as these guys?" Manny Orlina, another guest, butted in. "I just hope politics has not entered the picture.

If we're all in the dark, can you imagine how perplexed the person concerned must be.

* * *

Coke is here to stay. This was confirmed during the last PBA board meeting where the projected entry of two new teams from the PBL-Hapee and Harbour Centre was also discussed.

Now owned by Coke Atlanta, the Tigers will be under direct Coke International management.

* * *

No wonder PBL Commissioner Chino Trinidad has been unperturbed by persistent reports that the PBA is likely to succeed in wooing two of his teams to their camp.

It looks like neither team is in a hurry to turn pro.

"It's really flattering that the PBA should be interested in two of our teams. That can only mean that our league is very sound," he said.

Red Bull, Purefoods, Sta. Lucia, and Welcoat all came from the PBL.

Incidentally, Chino has given his blessing to Harbour Centre, if the team is inclined to represent the Philippines in the SEABA Champions Cup qualifier, scheduled April 9 to 14 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

* * *

It's a wonder no one took notice of sensational Fil-Am cager Gabe Norwood who came to Manila last year with the Athletes in Action squad composed of Division I US NCAA players.

The Americans played against Ateneo and the RP Nationals, clobbering both. Also in the team is 6-foot-10 David Pennisi, who is Mick's brother.

* * *

HOOPVINE: Belated birthday greetings to horseman Hermie Esguerra (March 7) and the Living Legend Sonny Jaworski who turned 60 last March 8, from loyal friend and associate Reli de Leon ... No way Ginebra cager Rudy Hatfield could postpone his wedding to bride Bethany in Ireland on August 4. This was planned a year ago, long before the FIBA ban was lifted.

Sixers clobber Bryant, Lakers

PHILADELPHIA—ANDRE IGUODALA scored 31 points and the Philadelphia 76ers spoiled the return of Kobe Bryant with their sixth straight victory, 108-92 over the Los Angeles Lakers on Friday.

Andre Miller scored 23 points, Kyle Korver had 18 and the Sixers scored 16 straight points in a 20-3 run to cap a perfect homestand (6-0) and win their seventh straight at home in front of their first sellout crowd of the season. The Sixers are making a late playoff push, one reason team president Billy King said before the game that coach Maurice Cheeks would return next season.

Bryant cooled in the second half after scoring 21 points in the first. He finished with 30 points after serving a one-game suspension for striking a player in the face, his second penalty for that action in a little more than a month.

At Miami, Shaquille O'Neal made his first seven shots and scored a season-high 32 points, Jason Williams added 20 points and surging Miami beat Minnesota, 105-91.

O'Neal finished 13-of-16 from the field and added nine rebounds. Williams shot 9-for-13 and Eddie Jones had 15 points and 11 rebounds for the Heat, who shot 58 percent to win their fifth straight overall, 11th in a row at home and move within 2½ games of Washington for the Southeast Division lead.

Kevin Garnett had 23 points and 11 rebounds and Ricky Davis added 21 points for Minnesota, which lost for the seventh time in nine games.

At Boston, Al Jefferson had 31 points and 16 rebounds, Paul Pierce added 21 points, and Boston rallied to beat Seattle, 118-103.

Rajon Rondo, starting in lieu of injured Delonte West, scored 20 points and Gerald Green had 19 for the Celtics.

AP

Complete Results

PHILADELPHIA 108, LA Lakers 92; BOSTON 118, Seattle 103; ATLANTA 106, Memphis 105; MIAMI 105, Minnesota 91; HOUSTON 112, New Jersey 91; Detroit 95, DENVER 82; PHOENIX 104, N.O./Oklahoma City 103; GOLDEN STATE 99, LA Clippers 89.

VICTOR: Maria Sharapova follows through on a shot against the Netherlands' Michaella Krajicek at the Pacific Life Open tennis tournament in Indian Wells, California, March 9. Sharapova won 7-6, 6-4. REUTERS

SPORTSWATCH

Torre tops La Union Open

SAN FERNANDO CITY, LA UNION—AS EXPECTED, GRANDMASTER EUGENE TORRE topped this year's La Union Open. The 55-year-old Torre beat Rizal Technological University standout Nelson Villanueva (1.5-0.5) in the finals to receive the champion's trophy and the P80,000 that goes with it. The event was organized by lawyer Sammy Estimo, the National Chess Federation of the Philippines executive director, and NCFP Region 1 coordinator Joseph Dumuk and supported by La Union Gov. Victor Ortega and San Fernando City Mayor Mary Jane Ortega and Villa Estrella Beach Resort Hotel here.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

FVR guest of honor at Elorde Awards

FORMER PRESIDENT FIDEL V. RAMOS HAS ACCEPTED THE INVITATION OF THE ELORDE family to be the guest of honor and speaker at the 7th Gabriel "Flash" Elorde Boxing Awards Night and Banquet of Champions on March 25 at the grand ballroom of the Elorde Sports Center in Sucat Road, Parañaque. In a fax message to Johnny Elorde, the son of the Da Flash who is overseeing the event together with wife Liza, FVR confirmed his attendance during the awards where Manny Pacquiao will be honored as Best Boxer of the Year for the sixth straight time. Also to be given awards aside from the 15 national champions and 21 international titlists are: Sammy Gello-Ani—best promoter, Antonio Aldeguer—best manager, Sivestre Abainza—best referee, Ferdinand Estrella—best judge, Edito "Ala" Villamor—best trainer, Eden Sonsona—most promising boxer, and Vin Vin Rufino versus Jeffrey Onate for the RP featherweight championship—as best fight. For information on the celebration of the boxing week, call 826-4463 or 825-9385.

Dr. Jose Leviste Cup March 17

LEVISTE

THE ATENEO CHESS TEAMS WILL PRESENT THE DR. JOSE P. Leviste Sr. Chess Cup from March 17 to 18 at the Grade School Cafeteria, Ateneo de Manila University. A project of the Ateneo Grade School, High School and Collegiate chess teams under the guidance of IM Idelfonso Datu, the event is open to all non-titled individuals whose active rating is 2050 and below. The tournament will employ the nine-round Swiss System with an active time control of 25 minutes per player. The tourney is in honor of the memory of Ateneo alumnus Dr. Jose P. Leviste Sr. (HS '33, AA '35). The tournament offers P9,000.00 plus trophy to the top placer. Special category winners will also be awarded in the event backed by Jose P. Leviste Jr. Registration fee is P280 but individuals who register on or before March 16 need only pay P250. .For inquiries, call 426-6001 loc. 4193, 426-5966 (Pinky Rosana) or text (0906) 438-0460 or (0922) 753-3538.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

Fatman derby submission of weights today

OFFICIAL ENTRIES WITH CORRESPONDING WEIGHTS OF 1.8 KG TO 2.4 KG MUST BE SUBmitted today at Pasay City Cockpit in connection with the Fatman and Mikko 6-cock derby. The three-day event (March 12, 14 and 16 ranks as PCC's top attraction every summer, said pit manager Eric dela Rosa. More than 100 participants joined last year. Action starts at 5 p.m. tomorrow featuring the 2-cock elimination round. Veteran derbyist Pepito Ngo will host the event which offers a guaranteed prize of P1.5 million for an entry fee of P18, 700. For details, call 843-1890, 843-1746 and 816-6750.

RACING FILE

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Miggy Man (2), Getting Better (5), Special Delivery (10), Prince Carlo/Prince Ferdie (6), Fear Me Not (11)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Red Hot Water (2), Revelation (4), Hoy Sobra Na (3), Perfect Time (6), Look Of Love (5)
Race 3—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Miss Victory (8), Deep Rising (2), Miata (5), Speed Terror (4), Even Storm (1)
Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—La Signorina (3), Spinning Bullet (6), Santiago/Ferrarione (1), Crystal City (7)
Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Superamerica (8), Afternoon Delight/Condoleeza (2), Military Might (9), Kai Maki (7), Sharp And Deadly (10)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Sambat (5), Gundam (8), Verdadera (11), Real Black (4), Vitality (7)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Bullet Day (10), Jaded Dancer/Fantastic Find (9), Affirmed/Out Of Sight (1), Rain Dancer (8), Beautiful Pet (5)
Race 8—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Golden Lance (3), Advance Party (6), Maricor's Charm (7), Fahrenheit (9), Dona Gelay (12)
Race 9—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Hot Stuff (10), Storm (4), Jade Express (6), Mr. Xavier (8), Guajido (2)
Race 10—(Tri)—Getting Darker (3), Monalisa (2), Dualargo (5)
Race 11—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Dancing Slow (4), Magic Dancer (5), Play It Again (8), Letshaveaparty (3), Quasimodo (7)
Race 12—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—White Princess (13), Yanong Rikit (5), Sweet Talk (8), Batangas Force (4), Friendly Venture (7)
Race 13—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Terry Toon (6), Fine Offer (10), Hurry Prince (13), Dondon's Entry (12), Daddy's Girl (4), Modern Classic (1)

Pacquiao downs sparmate

FILIPINO SUPERSTAR MANNY Pacquiao did one familiar thing during his build-up for his April 14 showdown with Jorge Solis: knock down his sparmate.

Last Thursday, Pacquiao sent down Jesar Ancajas in the second round during their sparring session at Rey Golingan's ABAP Boxing Gym in General Santos City, prompting Filipino trainer Buboy Fernandez to look for one more sparmate to help simulate the Mexican's style.

"Ancajas was knocked down in the second round. Manny hit him with a good shot," said Fernandez in a long-distance interview.

Aside from Ancajas, also providing needed sparring rounds to Pacquiao is Aaron Melgarejo, who is himself girding up for his title duel on April 8 in Cebu City. Fernandez said he has added RP-ranked Arniel Tinampay to the camp.

Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

Int'l Pairs dangle St. Andrews trip

LOCAL GOLFERS WILL SOON BE given the once-in-a-lifetime chance to play St. Andrews in Scotland as representatives of the Philippines in the International Pairs event.

Set to explode in local golf clubs, the Philippine qualifier is a two-man best-ball with handicap tournament, that stakes an all-expense paid to St. Andrews Scotland for the champions.

The eventual winning pair of the national finals will be accompanied by an official of the club they represent also for free.

The Philippines is the defending champion in the event after businessman Felix Cortez and Gary Sales beat more than 35 other countries last August at Celtic Manor in Wales.

So impressed was Cortez with the scale and professionalism of the competition that he took up the license to run and spread the International Pairs gospel here.

Those interested may call their clubs for the schedule of their respective tournaments or Primetime Events Management at 834-2444 (JoAnne or Pamela).

Filter Kings in MBT semis

FOILED THE LAST TIME, THE MIGHTY FILTER Kings finally clinched a semis berth by downing Koi Village, 80-70, in the MBT Invitational Cup Friday at the RTU gym in Mandaluyong City. Clark Torrente topscored for the Mighty Filter Kings with 18 points but it was Marvin Sioco who produced the game's biggest basket. The Mighty Filter Kings built a 24-point spread in the first half but wavered in the final quarter that saw Koi Village cut their lead to six points. But the Mighty Filter Kings were not to be denied this time as Sioco unloaded a three-pointer and Sam Gulayan scored on an inside play down the stretch to finally take the fight out of Koi Village.

Orduna karting champion in the making

FIL-AM JOEY ORDUNA MADE his mark in the recent 4th Golden Wheel Awards. Soon, he will be aiming for bigger goals in the National Karting Super Series.

Though it was just his debut year in the international scene, the 11-year-old grade school student at Maria Montessori Children's School Foundation-Merville displayed his competitive nature both in Italy and Macau.

Orduna, racing for the Tuason Racing School/Ready 2 Race team, was tapped to replace Renz Pazcoguin as the country's representative in the Mini Rok division of the ROK Cup International Final 2006 last October in Lonato, Italy.

Although he drove well, race engine problems prevented Joey from starting with the grid in several heats and finishing on the podium.

In Macau, Joey finished 1st or 2nd in all 4 of the qualifying and pre-final heats but crashed on an aggressive maneuver in the very early laps of the final heat.

In the finals of the 2006 Shell Superkarting Series, he was running second overall but figured in a collision in the pre-final heat.

ORDUNA

PCU reclaims NCAA championship

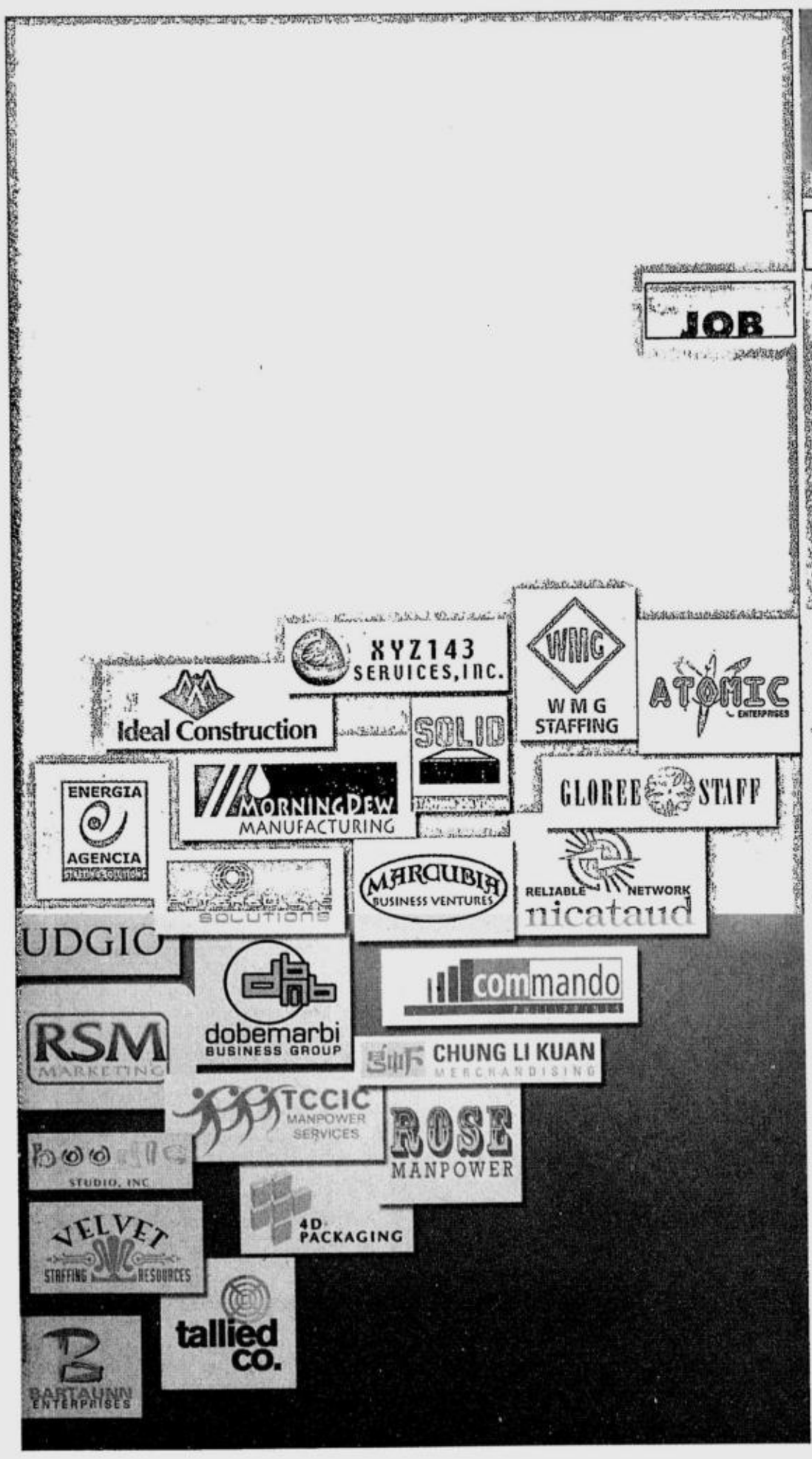
PHILIPPINE CHRISTIAN University reclaimed the overall senior's division championship as it stamped its class in almost every event in the Season 82 of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

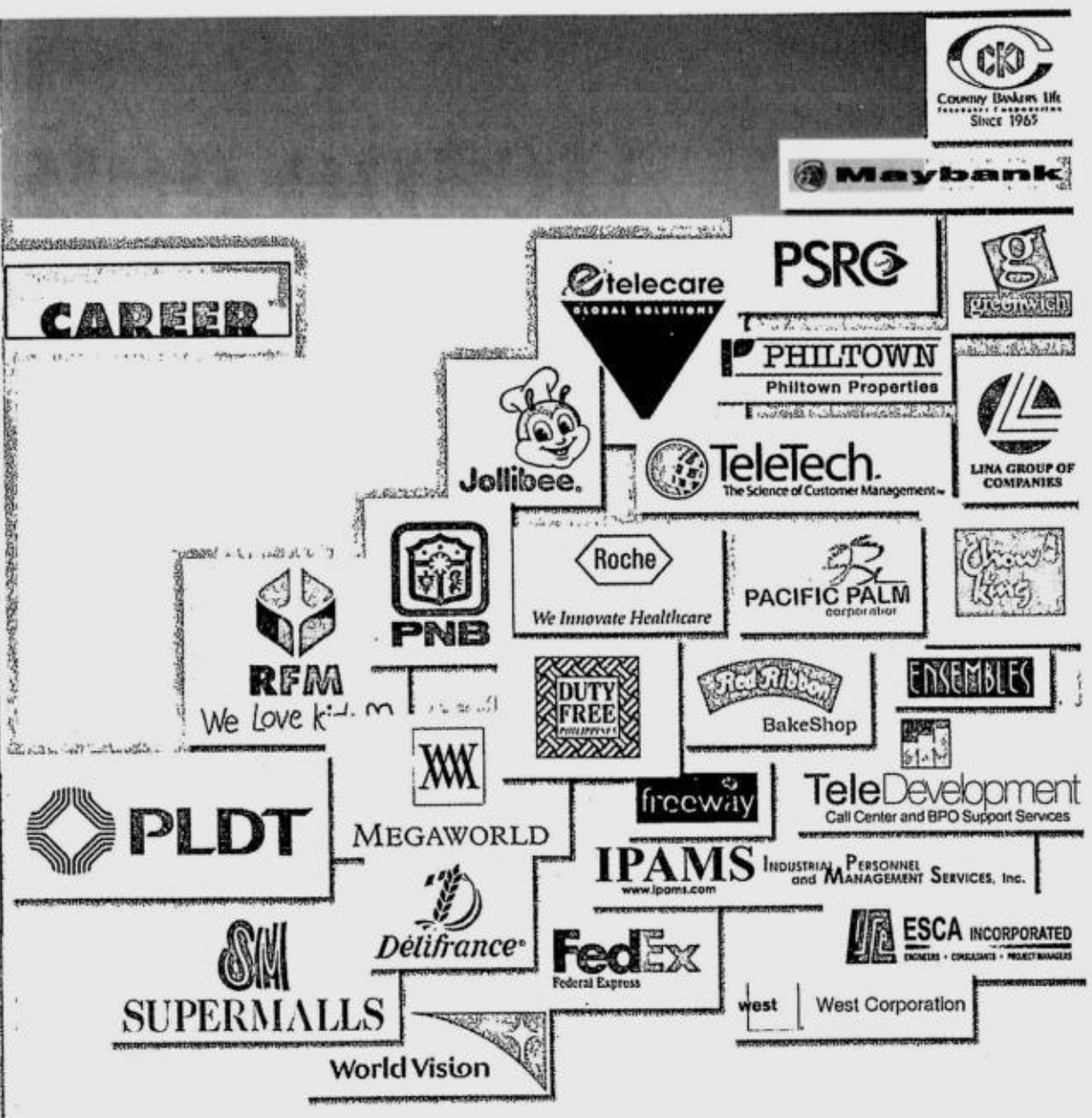
The Dolphins collected a total of 278 points to win their second senior's championship in three years, beating last year's champion, the College of St. Benilde Blazers, who finished with 198.5 points.

"Clinching the overall Championship in the NCAA is no easy venture considering the caliber of other opponents in the league," said PCU president Oscar Suarez.

Letran placed third overall with 148 points, followed by San Beda College (147), San Sebastian College (145.5), Mapua (86), Perpetual Help (62.5) and next season's host Jose Rizal University (13.5).

The men and women's beach volleyball teams led the Taft-based school's bid to win back the coveted title.





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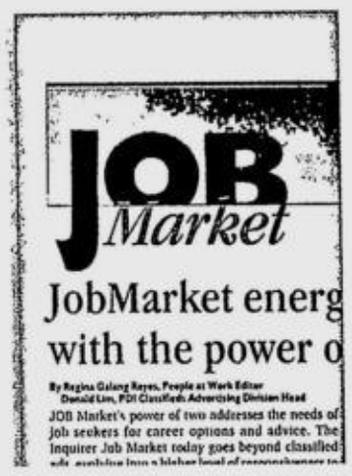

What's the news behind the news?

– Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc
Editor in Chief, Philippine Daily Inquirer

What nonsense is this?

– Eugenia Duran-Apostol
Founder, Philippine Daily Inquirer

They launched the Philippine Daily Inquirer in defiance of the news blackout after Ninoy's assassination. Since then, Inquirer has become a beacon for fearless journalism in the country. As a fitting tribute, these champions of press freedom have made it to the venerable list of Time Magazine's Asian Heroes.
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 2007

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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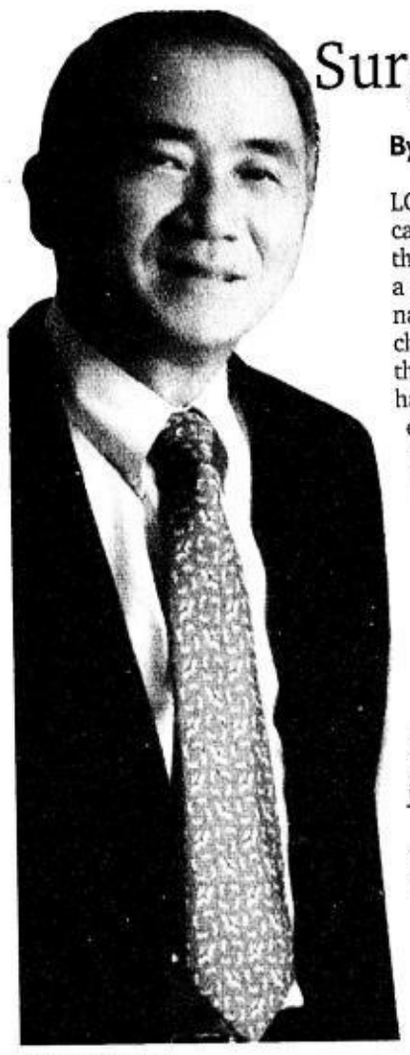
There's more to RP than nose jobs

Surgeon offers new method aimed at getting more medical tourists



DR. LUCERO

By Corrie Salientes-Narisma

LONG BEFORE THE TERM MEDICAL tourism became a buzzword in the country, Dr. Florencio Lucero, a senior plastic surgeon at Cardinal Santos Medical Center and chief of plastic surgery division of the Philippine General Hospital, had already been receiving foreign patients coming to the country for cosmetic and aesthetic surgery.

Medical tourism is a multibillion-dollar global industry that is still growing, which is why Philippines wants to get slice of the pie.

Dr. Lucero believes the Philippines—with its competitive costs and its pool of quality medical practitioners—stands a good chance of becoming a major player in this market.

Medical tourism includes not only cosmetic procedures but major surgeries as well.

The 60-year-old doctor thinks he can open up another market and contribute to the country's medical tourism via a new medical procedure that his clinic—Asian Plastic Surgery Center—is offering, called the autologous stem cell transplant.

This procedure, he says, guarantees patients suffering from degenerative diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's of a medical rejuvenation that will make them feel good inside and out.

Attracting attention

Lucero is confident the autologous stem cell transplant can call the attention of the traveling patients and draw them to the Philippines. Asian Plastic Surgery Center is the only facility that offers this treatment in the country, and one of only a handful in Asia.

Although the primary targets for this treatment are those with degenerative diseases, Lucero also prescribes this treatment to workaholics and driven individuals who may have stressed out their bodies too much.

The procedure however carries a steep price tag of $25,000 or some P1.25 million.

Lucero claims that the steep cost is still only a fraction of what it would cost in countries such as the United States and Europe.

He has so far performed stem cell transfers on 27 other patients, with Australian doctor of medicine Bill Paspaliaris doing the processing of the cells collected for infusion into the patients. Paspaliaris introduced the procedure to Lucero.

Hospital-hotels needed

Lucero is a firm believer in the country's capability to ride on the medical tourism boom. He, however, says much still has to be done.

While minor procedures can be done in existing facilities, even in resorts, Lucero says the country, if it were to become a major player in the booming medical tourism market, should have better, more sophisticated and more complete facilities that could accommodate long-staying foreign patients.

The doctor is specifically referring to special hotel-like hospitals that would serve as centers for holistic rejuvenation.

"Medical tourists would prefer to get treatment and stay in such facilities. After a procedure, they would want to wake up in places much nicer than the usual hospital rooms," says Lucero.

These facilities, he adds, should be equipped with the best possible medical equipment and manned by seasoned doctors who would be able to handle any medical case under any given situation.

Lucero's Asian Plastic Surgery Center, for one, plans to put up such a facility.

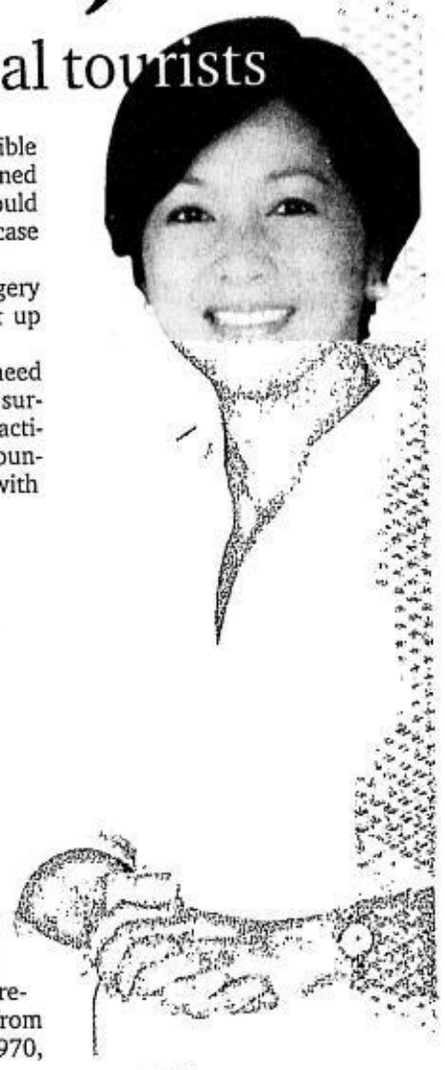
Lucero also stresses the need for the continued training of surgeons and other medical practitioners to ensure that the country's standards will be at par with international standards.

Training

To establish a reputation as among the best providers of medical services in the world, Lucero says the country has to make sure that continuous training of new and practicing surgeons is undertaken. This will ensure that local standards are at par with the best in the world.

Lucero can boast of his own medical education and training record. Right after receiving his medical degree from Far Eastern University in 1970,

THERE'S MORE/ B2



TINETTE Lucero

60-year-old bakeshop chooses to grow very slowly but surely

SOMETIME AFTER WORLD WAR II, when the Philippines was in the stage of rebuilding, there was a young lady named Inocencia Hizon who worked in Bud's Department Store in Escolta, Manila. Inocencia met an old woman who gave her a recipe for *ensaymada*.

The woman told Inocencia, "*Pag-aralan mo ito·ineng. Itago mo. Diyan ka yayaman.*"

Inocencia tried the recipe. Since she did not have a rolling pin, she used a glass bottle to flatten the *ensaymada* dough.

Despite the lack of proper equipment, she came up with light and fluffy *ensaymadas* deliciously coated with butter and sugar. Inocencia teamed up with her sister, Paz: the former would do all the baking while the latter would peddle the treats in downtown Manila.

Inocencia eventually married Eduardo Zamora, an employee of Selecta, and they set up Hizon's Bakery in Raon in 1946. The business transferred to Ermita in 1963 where it remains a revered landmark in the district. Paz, who married a Wong, remained involved in the bakeshop.

As the business flourished, Eduardo and Inocencia were able to go abroad to study and observe baking methods. In the 1960s, they often went to New York. And in 1980s, they went to Germany.

The Hizon's pioneers passed away in the mid-1980s, but they were able to pass on the recipes and the love for the business to their children and grandchildren.

Today, the bakeshop is run by grandchild Frances May Calixto and her mother Milagros Z. Roasa and aunt, Gina Hizon Wong. Frances' brother Carlo and his wife are also active in the day-to-day operations.

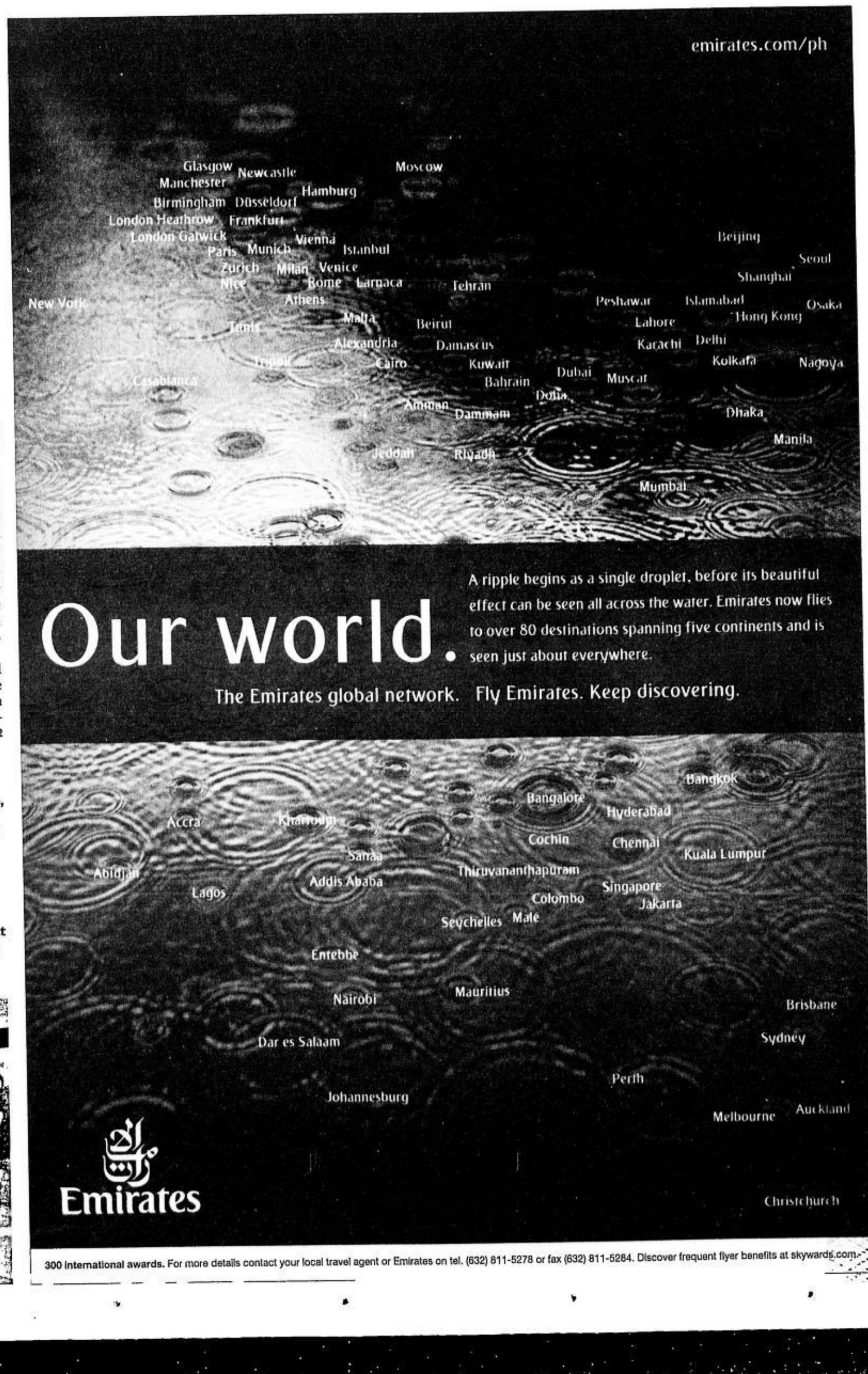
Asked why they did not expand substantially over the years, which resulted in their being overtaken by other bakeshops, which already have hundreds of outlets, Milagros answers, "We want the quality of Hizon's to be controlled. We believe in slowly but surely. We assure customers that they won't be disappointed in quality. Customers keep coming wherever we are situated."

Hizon's has outlets at the food court in Landmark, a kiosk in the Mall of Asia and a bakeshop in the Promenade Mall in Green-

60-YEAR-OLD/ B2

FRANCES May Calixto, granddaughter of Inocencia Hizon-Zamora, founder of Hizon's Bakeshop at the Hizon's Cafe in Manila

HIZON'S Cafe



German brewery offers organic soft drink

FRANKFURT—IS THE WORLD ready for an organic soft drink brewed in Germany? With consumers increasingly concerned about wellness and quality, the makers of an all-natural fizzy soft drink called Bionade are planning a foray into new territories.

Some industry analysts predict the small company will have a tough time making an impact outside its home market, in a cut-throat global beverage market where choices abound.

"We plan to go into the whole of old Europe this year as well as the US, and the Canadian and Japanese markets," Peter Kowalsky, chief executive of the privately held firm, told Reuters.

In flavors including orange ginger, elderberry, lychee and herb, the self-styled "first and only nonalcoholic refreshment drink produced by a purely organic process" has become Germany's trendiest beverage, even though its makers shun advertising.

Kowalsky plans to pursue the advertising-free route abroad, and is determined the firm will not be bought out—he says he has already spurned an approach from Coca-Cola.

Beer-brewing principles

Bionade was founded in 1995 when Dieter Leipold, whose family brewery was on the brink of collapse, started work on his dream to create an organic soft drink that would be fermented on beer-brewing principles.

His soda had its first break at the end of the 1990s in Hamburg, the country's media capital, when a bar put the fresh-tasting, low-calorie Bionade on its drinks list.

The advertising-free approach has worked in Germany.

With its unusual colors and flavors, the sparkling drink caught on in Hamburg and spread to other bars and restaurants in Germany. Supermarkets followed and last year Bionade says it tripled sales of its 0.33 liter bottles to 70 million.

That's a drop in the ocean compared with Coca-Cola's 3.5 billion liters sold in Germany alone last year.

A middle-aged German Bionade-drinker, sitting in a Berlin bar, said she was drawn to try the drink by curiosity when she saw its unusual bottles on a supermarket shelf.

"Ginger is now my favorite," she said. What appeals to her most about the drink is its potential as an alternative to alcohol without the fizzy familiarity of sugary soft drinks.

Kowalsky told Reuters his company had already rebuffed a takeover approach from Coke, which has a distribution agreement with Bionade for Germany.

A spokesperson for Coca-Cola in Berlin declined to confirm an approach had been made, citing a policy of not commenting on speculation. But he added that the companies' product lines complemented each other nicely.

Word-of-mouth

As Bionade—situated in the village of Ostheim in the Rhoen hills in central Germany—plans to expand into markets abroad it will continue to spurn advertising, Kowalsky said.

The company prefers to rely on word-of-mouth and local distribution partners, pepped up by media coverage about the small company's global ambitions.

"People in some foreign markets have a far better understanding of luxury foodstuffs than the Germans," he added.

Analysts noted Bionade faces a tough task.

"The United States in particular is a difficult market," said Patrik Schwendimann of brokerage ZKB in Switzerland. "It usually takes several years and a lot of patience to make any headway there." Jens Pollmann, corporate consultant at PricewaterhouseCoopers, said the goal of entering the US market was ambitious.

"The difficulty is to find a foreign distributor," said the Duesseldorf-based consultant responsible for beverages in Germany. "But I wouldn't exclude the possibility that it'll work out for them in the end." ZKB's Schwendimann said launching in many countries at the same time could be fraught with risks.

Kowalsky said Bionade plans to expand its alliances with firms like Ikea and Starbucks, whose outlets in Germany recently started stocking the drink. He aims to continue brewing Bionade in Germany, but bottle it at partners' facilities.

Bionade appointed an international sales manager about six months ago, ramped up staff to more than 100 people from about 60 a year before, and plans to create more jobs to meet the growing demand at home and abroad.

Kowalsky said it might take several years to turn a profit abroad. He said he finds it hard to find the right words for his nine-year-old daughter when she asks why he travels so much and why he'll be on the road more in the future.

"We're a family company," he said, adding the answer doesn't always satisfy her. "We're always looking out for the next generation." *Reuters*

Chicken dung smells of profits

By Delmar Cariño
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—CHIcken dung smells bad. But when sold as fertilizer, one smells a profit.

Since 2005, Barangay Shilan here has been the center of the province's chicken dung trade as chicken manure remains a cheap and readily available fertilizer for the province's more than 200,000 farmers.

A sack of chicken dung is sold here at P75 to P80 a sack, and it is used to fertilize the capital town's vegetable gardens.

Benito Hipolito, president of Benguet Truckers and Traders Association, said the chicken dung trade would remain viable as long as the prices of chemical-based commercial fertilizer remain beyond the reach of the ordinary farmers.

Hipolito said poultry farms in Batangas, Cavite and Laguna are the major suppliers of chicken dung.

Dung trader Caloy Emok said around 10 trucks of chicken dung arrive at Shilan daily. He said a 10-wheel truck can load 500 sacks of the merchandise, a six-wheel truck, 300, and an Isuzu Elf truck, 250.

Traders buy the manure at a wholesale price of P38 to P40 a sack from the poultry farms and retail them to farmers at P75 to P80.

Emok said the prices depend on the class of chicken dung.

First class chicken dung comes from the layers, dung from 45-day-old broilers are considered second class, while the third-class dung comes from older hens.

Emok said the trade also helped create employment.

For one thing, a truck needs four to five helpers, including the driver. And then there are porters at areas designated for the trade here, he said.

The town's treasury said it collected P93,000 in fees in 2006, or an average of P8,000 to P10,000 a month. This came from the 50-centavo tax imposed per sack of chicken dung.

In nearby Tublay town, Vice Mayor Ruben Paoad said that in the last quarter of 2005 alone, the trade generated an income of P673,027.50 in fees for the town coffers.

"We approved an ordinance and imposed a P1 fee for every sack," he said.

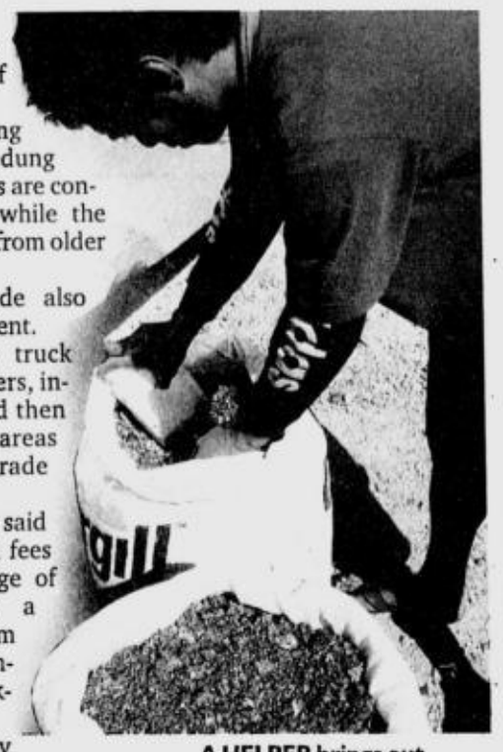
At that time, around 15 trucks a day delivered 700 sacks of chicken dung.

The chicken dung trade that started in Shilan, Dengsi and Tomay came to a halt in 1999 when the CA affirmed a regional trial court decision that stopped the trade.

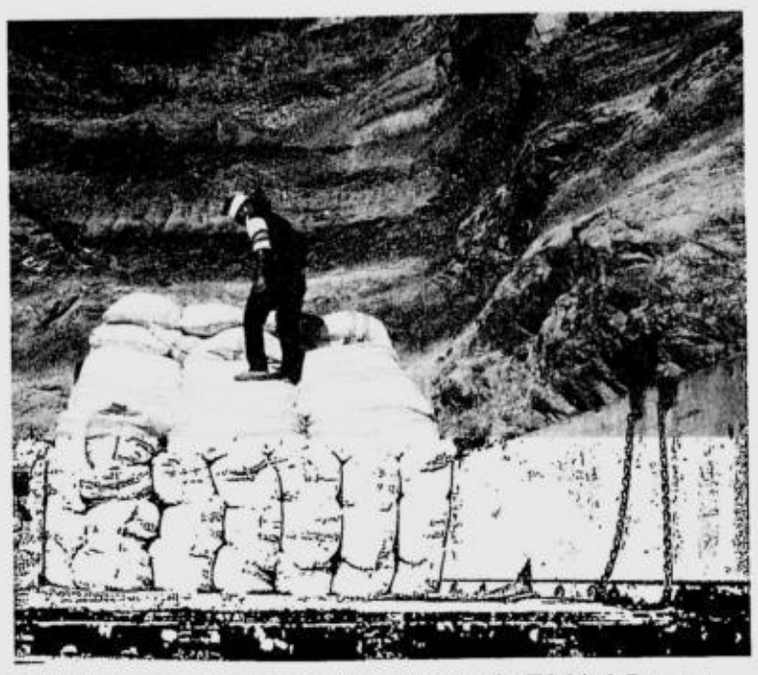
Around 150 residents earlier complained that the unabated entry and trade of chicken dung were inimical to their health.

The town council then approved an ordinance for abatement of nuisances which included the buy and sell of chicken dung along highways and within residential zones.

But a clamor from farmers that they needed the manure for their vegetable farms forced the council to pass a resolution in 2005 allowing the sale of chicken dung in designated areas. Several areas in Shilan were selected after consultations with residents.



A HELPER brings out samples of chicken manure from one of the sacks.



TRUCKS loaded with chicken dung at Shilan, La Trinidad, Benguet wait for farmers. PHOTOS BY DELMAR CARIÑO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Ex-future doctor runs MT firm

"I DIDN'T WANT TO GO INTO ENGINEERING. I wanted to be different," says Malu Simeon-Florendo, CEO of Multi-Scribe Global Outsourcing Inc. (MSGO).

She was living under the wing of her father then, an entrepreneur who founded a boiler manufacturing and engineering outfit that was to become the leader in its industry. Her whole family was in the engineering business, so, to be "different," the young lady pursued a degree in medicine at the UE College of Medicine.

She realized she did not want to be a doctor. She worked in HR for a few years, then got an MBA under the Regis Program at the Ateneo School of Business. She landed a job as a business development manager for a local domain administration company, dotPH. "(Working at dotPH) was fast-track learning in IT," she says. "I learned to think out of the box, to be creative, to make 'something' out of 'nothing.' I learned to be flexible, to be innovative, because things in the IT industry change so fast."

Her interest in medical transcription (MT) was sparked by her contact with her mother-in-law, an investor in an MT school based in Makati. At around the same time, two important things happened. First, she invited Roly Disini, a colleague at Dotph, to listen to her business plan for an MT venture. Second, Simeon-Florendo touched base with two high school batch mates, Hazel Pancho and Mina Naranjilla, who also harbored entrepreneurial dreams of the MT kind. Everything gelled.

Disini, Pancho, Naranjilla, Simeon-Florendo and her husband scraped together funding to buy office furnishings, telecom and IT equipment, and redundant broadband connections.

FLORENDO

Luckily, office space came from an "angel-aunt" who allowed the MT start-up to use a portion of one floor of her building on Visayas Avenue in Quezon City on very soft terms. Luckily, again, the start-up bagged its first client—a hospital in Kansas, USA—through a Fil-American doctor who was serendipitously in Manila for a medical mission.

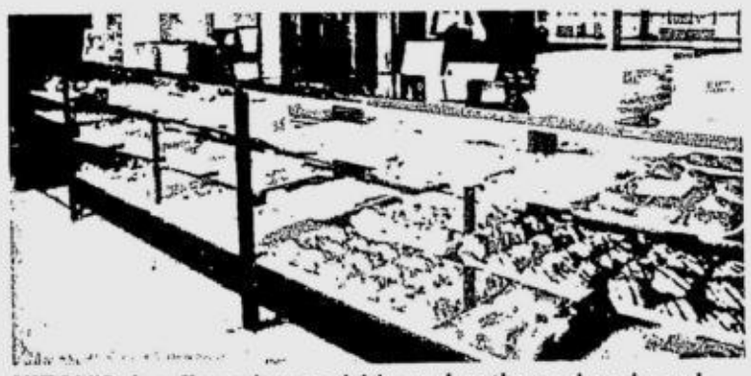
Simeon-Florendo signed up with the Medical Transcription Industry Association of the Philippines Inc. (MTIAPI) and the American Health Information Management Association (Ahima) and sales-blitzed the states of California, Illinois, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Arizona, Florida, Texas and Kansas armed with a laptop, a webcam, a PowerPoint presentation and a supply of Filipino spunk. She signed up three big clients on her first US sales trip.

Today, MSGO is the Philippines' largest "one-hundred percent MT" company, with 130 workstations. From a few square meters in one floor back in July 2005, MSGO now occupies four floors of the same building where it began.

MSGO also has an interesting production strategy. "MSGO uses in-house sub-contractors which it calls NEST (New Expert Satellite Team). A production group of MSGO, the NEST is an innovative management concept with strong competencies in quality assurance, control span, sub-contracting, "*bayanihan*," entrepreneurship and turn-key business operations," says Simeon-Florendo.

MSGO now oversees ten NESTs owned by IT entrepreneurs and three corporate NESTs that serve as the quality assurance team. Each NEST receives On-the-Job Training for all its future employees, training upgrade every quarter with MSTC, e-Learning Program for NEST administrators and business owners. "NEST is more than a business-in-a-box. It is a turnkey approach to setting up an outsourcing business. It is a nurturing environment and a learning proposition. Our NEST owners don't just learn, they also earn," said Simeon-Florendo.

The CEO ascribes her company's success not simply to hard work, spunk and luck, but to the company's Christian values and its total embrace of its mission to give back to the community. "We pay it forward by offering scholarships in our training facilities to qualified students, and by helping place them in allied companies. We pay it forward by donating a Gawad Kalinga livelihood center for every two NESTs we build."



HIZON'S also offers other specialties such as the mocha cake and orange peel.

60-year-old bakeshop...

From page B1

hills. They plan to open another cafe this year in Makati.

Hizon's became a household name because of its *ensaymadas* and other specialties such as the mocca cake, orange peel. But the *ensaymada* remains the favorite of customers.

"Gifted *talaga sa pag-bake ang tiya ko*," Gina says of Inocencia Hizon Zamora. "*Bago niya tinayo ang* bakeshop, *wala siyang* formal *na pag-aaral*."

Gina fondly recalls that the first Hizon's *ensaymadas* were extremely big. "*Kahit* ordinary, *malalaki rin ang* size!" Hizon's still serves the *ensaymada* in big sizes.

Frances adds, "*Iba ang* process *ng pag*-bake *ng ensaymada namin*."

While they cannot divulge what makes the Hizon's *ensaymada* different from others, they do reveal that Maya Cake Flour helps in keeping it delicious. Hizon's has been using Maya Cake Flour in all its cakes and pastries for years.

Besides the cake flour supplied by Liberty Commodities Corp., Hizon's uses other Maya products like Maya Hotcake Mix, Gold Medal flour for tarts and Maya Brownie Mix for chocolate pastries and treats.

Although there have been offers for franchising, the heirs of Paz and Inocencia Hizon would rather keep the business within the family. "In that way, we can assure the customers of the high quality of baking and very personalized service." Frances explains.

There's more to...

From page B1

including a one-year internship at the USAF Hospital in the former Clark Airbase, he went through a five-year training on general and plastic surgery at the University of the Philippines General Hospital.

For another two years, he undertook training on cosmetic surgery at Straith Clinic in Michigan as a fellow. Another fellowship brought the doctor to a training on burn surgery at the Cook Country Hospital in Chicago, Illinois.

Lucero teaches at the UP College of Medicine and he offers training programs for practicing plastic surgeons both here and abroad.

The doctor also makes it a point to do speaking engagements overseas and attend international conferences on his field as his contribution to making other countries recognize the Philippines as a world-class destination for medical tourists.

Investments in such facilities and the efforts to build the country as a major destination for the traveling patients would be worth it, as recent trends guarantee the continuous expansion of the market in the years ahead.

Stem cell

The autologous stem cell transplant is an exclusive collaboration between Lucero and AusPaspaliaris.

Paspaliaris had trained in clinical pharmacology and regenerative medicine, and a clinical research specialist involved in the development and promotion of adipose-derived stem cells and their clinical use. He is also the chief executive of Hong Kong-based Stem Tech Ltd.—the provider of the technology for the stem cell transplant.

His previous work with the French Foreign legion in Angola and Congo, according to documents, allowed Paspaliaris to do specific study on stem cell therapy to ease pain and hasten healing of wounds. That's where he observed faster recovery and anti-aging results of the treatment.

Lucero, who is also president of the Philippine Association of Plastic Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons and member of the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, claims the autologous stem cell transplants hold great promise of curing a wide variety of degenerative diseases—Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, cancer, diabetes, arthritis, spinal cord injuries and aging itself.

Process

Stem cells are the basic building of life, they are formed at conception and specialized to become the different tissues of the body. As people grow older and their stem cells in some parts of their bodies get depleted, the regenerative power of the body decreases.

This is why people succumb to diseases, disorders and to various problems that come with aging. In stem cell transplant procedures, doctors tap into the body's dormant stem cells to repair and replace injured or diseased tissue.

Unlike other stem cell transfer technologies that use cells from peripheral blood or bone marrow, the autologous stem cell transplant is less controversial and, according to Lucero, equally effective and much safer as it uses cells harvested from the body fats of the patients.

While the bone marrow process of harvesting stem cells takes about five days, the autologous stem cell transplant takes only about four hours, according to the doctor. A patient has to first undergo a mini liposuction to extract 100 cc of fat from the body from which the cells are harvested.

The dormant cells collected are incubated in stimulating growth factors, isolated and infused back into the patient intravenously. The procedure is done in the operating room of a hospital under local anesthesia. The harvesting of the cell takes an hour while the incubation, stimulation and infusion into the patient take another three hours.

No moral, religious issue

Lucero says there are no moral and religious issues involved in this procedure since the same person will donate and receive the stem cells. This also means there is no problem in matching the stem cells.

The body fat, according to some papers obtained from the doctor, is the best source of stem cells because it is rich in mesenchyme stem cell and that more than 100 times more stem cells can be harvested as compared to bone marrow.

Lucero's wife, Tinette, was one of his first patients. Tinette, who is now 46, attests to the effectiveness of the treatment not only in treating her mild Parkinson's disease but also in making her look better and feel more energetic.

"Not only does it treat diseases, it also gives one other beneficial side effects as bonus," the wife says, referring to the renewed energy she experienced after the procedure.

Humility or self-promotion?

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

IN THEORY, WE AGREE THAT SELF-aggrandizing leaders are repulsive, but in practice, we are all tempted to put ourselves squarely in the spotlight. In our zeal to be admired, we may choose to crusade our personal cause rather than the mission of our company. The choice between humility and self-promotion is a central drama in J.R.R Tolkien's "Fellowship of the Ring."

In the "Fellowship of the Ring," the fate of Middle Earth revolves around the magic Ring. Forged by the dark lord, Sauron, the Ring's potency is too powerful to be safely wielded for the purposes of good. Preying upon the pride of its bearer, the Ring poses a corruptive strength too great to be controlled.

With Sauron's evil forces amassing to recapture the all-powerful Ring, the leaders of Middle Earth—elves, dwarves, men and wizards meet to discuss its fate. Surrendering the Ring to Sauron would result in the death and destruction of all that is good in Middle Earth. Yet, no one dares to try to master the Ring's power.

After heated debate, the leaders of Middle Earth are forced to choose an incredibly risky strategy. They will secretly march the Ring deep into enemy territory and cast it into the lake of fire from which it was forged. This way, and only this way, will the magic Ring be destroyed and Middle Earth saved from peril.

For the journey into enemy territory, the Ring is entrusted to Frodo Baggins—a small, simple hobbit, who, in his humility, is the most resistant to the magic Ring's powerful allure. A warrior from each race (men, dwarves and elves) is chosen to escort Frodo across enemy lines.

Boromir, a great leader of men, is selected as one of the companions for Frodo's quest. The relationship between Boromir and Frodo, centering on the Ring, paints a contrast between self-promotion and humility.

Boromir: The self-promoting prince

Hailing from a great kingdom of men, Boromir is a hero to his people—a strong warrior who has long thwarted the forces of evil on the battlefield. A proud man, he is quick to call attention to his people's contributions to the war against Sauron's armies.

In his arrogance, Boromir believes he can master the force of the magic Ring. Unfortunately, the Ring masters him. Yielding to the Ring's corruptive influence, Boromir attempts to steal it from Frodo. His betrayal costs him his life and nearly ruins the mission to destroy the Ring.

Frodo: The humble hobbit

Small in stature, Frodo is weak compared to the warriors around him and common in the midst of the royalty escorting him on his mission. Although he feels unequal to the task of bearing the Ring, Frodo realizes he is the best hope for successfully destroying it. His humility allows him repeatedly to resist the Ring's temptation. With the help of those around him, he successfully carries out his assignment, and Middle Earth is saved.

Level 4 to Level 5

Headlines are made by people with a commanding presence like Boromir. Willful and self-important, these leaders charge to the forefront and often achieve substantial, but short-lived success. Boromir typifies Level 4 leadership qualities as described by Jim Collins.

- Egotistical
- Charismatic
- High-Performer
- Builds Short-Term Success, Not Successors
- Craves the Credit for Accomplishments

Dynasties are built by humble, but confident leaders like Frodo. Unpretentious and sincere, such leaders patiently develop people and processes to position their organization for long-term success. Frodo exemplifies the Level 5 leadership qualities envisioned by Jim Collins.

- Humble
- Praises Others for Victories Won
- Invests in Successors for Lasting Success
- Elevates the Mission above Personal Prestige

Summary

Perhaps no threat looms larger to leaders than excessive pride. Self-important leaders become short-sighted, and they lose perspective. Humble leaders forgo the limelight, retain focus on the future, and are rewarded with results.

Inspiration for this thought piece is attributed to Ray Blunt's work, "Getting Ahead without Tooting Your Own Horn," featured on: http://www.govleaders.org/getting_ahead.htm .

For information on John Maxwell's in-house or public leadership or teamwork workshops, please email us at bing@inspire.ph or call 813-2049/2732 and ask for Jesi or Bing. Text MAXWELL ON to 4632 (Smart) to get daily SMS leadership insights from John Maxwell. God bless!

Learn to make herbal soap

MAKING AND USING herbal soaps is not only hygienic. It could be profitable as well.

The Golden Treasure Skills Development Program will conduct a one-day seminar on soap making to be held at the Vermont Blooms Unlimited at 9 Anonas Rd., Proj. 3, Quezon City on March 17 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Topics to be discussed are sourcing of materials and costing. Participants will get to experience on how to make glycerin (clear) soaps, with designs and embellishment, molded soaps—in different designs, fancy soaps—creative soaps in individualized designs, specialty soaps—exfoliative soaps, whitening soap, deodorant soap, natural soaps—scrub soaps of ginger, coconut, pumice, Bonus course: bath fizzers

Participants will receive certificate of training right after the seminar. Lunch and snacks will be served and all the materials including handouts will be provided. For reservation, please call 436-7826; 952-40-28; 951-2966 and 913-6551.

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Entrep-Talk

Sunday BIZ

'Quality sales more than quantity sales'

How this garments firm is riding through a competitive business

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

THREE YEARS AGO, BOBSON'S VICTOR Tan knew that challenges lay ahead in his garments business.

The scene had changed since he set up Bobson's—an apparel line for male and female in 1987 under the Crolific Garments Manufacturing Corp. From outright purchase of the clothes by the department stores, to concessions, to setting up brand boutiques ... Tan now has been taking the franchising route to expand his venture.

Although Bobson has grown substantially over the past 15 years, from 10 employees in 1987, to 500 workers today, Tan admits competition has gotten tougher. The past years' influx of goods from China has also aggravated the situation.

With 150 outlets and 25 boutiques nationwide, Bobson's strategy today is to go for better margins instead of volumes, from its sales, he says.

"If the margins are too narrow, why fight for volume. Go for less volume but better margins."

Tan explains: "If you are running after a certain sales volume, you are in a position to slash price in order to fast move your product, that way you will sacrifice sum profit margin. For now we wanted to have more quality sales than quantity sales."

Tan also complains that people are buying less. He says instead of buying clothes, consumers buy cell phone load.

Bobson's chosen path for expansion is franchising.

"Franchising is our way to expand. We look for people with passion for the business," he says.

Although the franchising route was decided upon by Crolific three years ago, Tan admits there were kinks that had to be ironed out over the past three years.

These include the internal systems, monitoring programs, delivery of goods, bar coding. The garments firm had to get a consultant to help iron out the kinks.

Today it has four franchisees and expects two more this year.

Bobson's market is the broad C with prices ranging from P299 to P399 for tops and P699 to P799 for pants.

More than half of its market are girls who are really after style, comfort and price.

Tan comments that girls aged 16 to 19 go for the brand and the style more while the 25 year olds and older go for the fit and comfort.

He also notes boys usually shop alone while girls have friends with them.

"Men are more loyal while girls like new brands," he says.

Greater Manila Area residents are more *fashionistas* and go more for style while those outside Metro Manila prefer more plain and woven designs.

The franchising fee for Bobson is P500,000 which includes among others the use of the trade name, the site approval, training for the staff, procurement program, marketing assistance.

The initial term is five years. There is no royalty fee but there are advertising and marketing costs. The required space is 60 to 80 square meters.

Although its marketing budget has been limited, Bobson has gotten a boost from having Aga Muhlach as its icon endorser. Tan and Aga are close friends and Tan would often get feedback from Aga on their clothes design.

Homegrown pizza business rises from the ashes

Text and photos by Cristina Arzadon
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LAOAG CITY—YOUNG ENTREpreneur Candy Caluya had no immediate plan to spread a chain of stores until she lost her three-year-old pizza and pasta business to a fire.

Her investments literally went up in smoke in March 2004. She reported a loss of P1.5 million, covering a building, refrigerator, gas range, microwave oven, kitchen utensils, stocks of pizza boxes, cellular phone cards and even her law books.

"I reconstructed all my pizza recipes from scratch. I could not even remember the mixture of a tart recipe because I also lost my mother's time-tested recipe books in the fire," she says.

Caluya, 34, owns the homegrown C&E (taken from her parents' name, Constante and Estelita) pizza parlor chain here. She built her own store in 2001 as an addition to the original outlet that her mother put up in the 1980s.

The Caluyas had created a mark in the pizza-pasta business here as they started a tradition of producing homemade products.

Caluya recalls having gone to the site where her pizza outlet used to stand the day after the fire razed the building. Her store was housed in an old building that used to serve as a movie house.

"There was still smoke at the site. Everything was a blur that day. I wanted to sweep away everything from my mind. I kept thinking whether the fire started from our store. I didn't want to think about how much I lost," she says.

"But there I was, recalling how much stock did the cabinets contain or how much pizza boxes were stored because the fire department needed the report," she adds.

She did not have the heart to tell her mother (who managed the principal pizza outlet) how much was lost in the fire because, she says, "I was afraid how she might feel knowing that I lost a lot."

"I told her that I only lost around P500,000," she says.

CANDY Caluya has spread four C&E outlets in four Ilocos towns since a fire razed her first store in 2004. She is holding her pizza a la carbonara which the competition has tried to beat without success.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD pizza parlor plans on franchising.

"It was easier on me to get a grip [of how much I lost] because I am used to having nothing. Whatever I earned from the business was merely temporary. But what I could not reconcile was allowing each day pass without doing anything and letting our patrons down for not serving them what they have gotten used to," she says.

Caluya says she holed herself up in her room the rest of the morning and drove downtown after lunch to look for a space to rent.

But since she found no ideal space, she leased a lot on the same block where her former parlor was located and built a new structure for her new outlet barely a month after the fire.

She made key decisions by herself because her parents left for Metro Manila the day after the fire to seek medical treatment.

She used some of her savings and the money she borrowed from her sister to build the structure, and started buying new kitchen facilities, including frying pans and menu booklets.

"It was a fresh start. I was fired by an inner strength to get things done. I was knocking on doors of my regular customers dishing out personalized letters and discount cards. I had a streamer fluttering on my new building that says, 'From the ashes, we will rise,'" she says, noting that her opening day fittingly coincided with the Holy Week in April 2004.

THE LOCALLY GROWN pizza parlor has developed a niche in the pizza market. It continues growing despite the presence of a giant pizza chain.

Caluya says her patrons did not let her down.

She generated P50,000 on her opening day in her brand new outlet, way above the P15,000 daily that her former outlet earned.

"I was dying inside my kitchen because of non-stop cooking from morning until night. But it was all worth it because customers kept pouring in," she says.

Her parents returned to the city a year later and found their daughter managing two new outlets (actually the third in a chain of outlets, including her mother's main branch).

Caluya put up her second store in Batac town, three months later when she discovered that a former cook was cashing in on a pizza outlet using fraudulent means.

The cook set up a booth in Batac and capitalized on the name of C&E and started selling pizza and pastries that were distinctly similar to the products of her famous parlor.

"It was downright unfair competition. She imitated all our products. Her trade name was even 'CJ Pizza Pasta,'" she says.

She says her former cook's kitchen venture eventually folded up when her Batac outlet started picking up.

From then on, Caluya kept on expanding her business.

She opened a garden pizzeria in February 2005, which was annexed to her Laoag outlet to accommodate more customers.

She also opened another chain in Bacarra town last year to test her entrepreneurial skills. She opened the Bacarra outlet on the request of customers who were mostly from that town.

"After the fire, I became more aggressive in putting up more stores because I realized that everything can be taken away at once," she says.

Caluya recently introduced her "C&E pizza on wheels" where three delivery motorcycles and a mini-cab bring pizza boxes to several villages in the city and in people's centers in the towns of Pasuquin, Vintar, Dingras, Badoc and Paoay.

"We keep track of all the festivals and special occasions where there are public gatherings so my crew will be there to sell our products," she says.

Her delivery crew brings around 50 pizza boxes in their daily trips to the towns where there are big populations of students and government workers. The sales are usually higher when there are town activities like fiestas and public programs, she adds.

"The message of that fire remains to be beyond my comprehension. I just look at it as a way of letting me understand things from a different perspective," she says.

Caluya continues seeking that message by taking her business to higher levels. She is taking a course on entrepreneurship at the Asian Institute of Management to help her chart new business directions.

She has found a way of returning the blessings that have come her way upon the recommendation of her spiritual adviser.

Her new "baby" is a pizza outlet in Badoc town, which will open on March 21. She also plans to soon venture into franchising.

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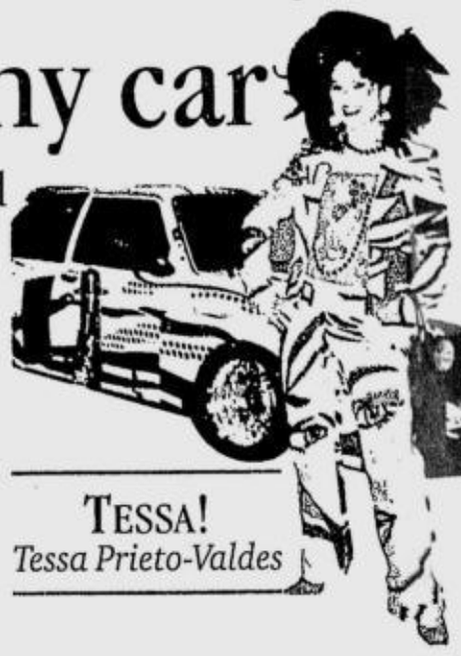

TESSA!
Tessa Prieto-Valdes

GOLDEN classmates Marilou Guingona, Maritess Lopez and Marixi Prieto with Joe Guingona, Juvenal Sanso and SM tycoon Henry Sy

SOLENN Heusaff, Isha Andaya, Lulu Tan Gan and Rocio Olbes

FANTASTIC director Freddie Santos, Raul Manzano, Monchet Olives and Jojo Guingona

DOES ART IMITATE LIFE OR is it the other way around? Life becomes more vivid and vibrant once injected with a touch of artistry. Indeed, there are so many great examples of infusing art into installations other than the usual canvas.

To the sheer delight of car enthusiasts, art aficionados and stylish fashionistas, BMW recently launched the Philippine exhibition of the world-famous BMW Art Cars. The Ayala Museum played host to the works of renowned artists like **Andy Warhol**, **Roy Lichtenstein**, **Frank Stella** and **Ken Done**—except none of it done on traditional media.

A total of 15 internationally acclaimed artists were commissioned to create "rolling sculptures" by painting on different BMW car models and these art cars have been traveling and impressing the world ever since. All the artists are represented in the Ayala Museum show, albeit some only via glass-encased scale models of their art cars.

The BMW Art Cars Collection is on display for free viewing until the end of the month. The awesome works also have amazing videos of some of the artists working on the cars.

As I rushed in wearing a Roy Lichtenstein-printed suit, I spotted BMW Philippines CEO Dr. **Joerg Breuer**, who was headed back to BMW headquarters in Munich that same evening. He quickly carried me into the air and we posed for a farewell photo. The first time I featured him in this column years ago, it was a silly photo of him toying around with my bright orange feather boa. We will miss his candid, zany sense of humor.

The new incoming president, **Andreas Biehler**, was introduced that evening. Fun-loving Doctor Breuer has enjoyed his three-year stint here and I am sure the new presi-

BABY/C4

HSBC CEO Mark Watkinson and lovely wife Sarah

HSBC SVP Private Banking Ailene Litonjua and Isa Velayo

HSBC PR girl Cat Manese and Global Markets VP Corrie Purisima

Nature at its best at Ayala Greenfield Estates

A wide expanse of sky and countless trees, a historic mountain that looms majestically over the southern sky, and an expertly designed golf course that brings together the best of these elements to create a world-class sport challenge. Some would call this a personal paradise that combines nature at its grandest and leisure at its most luxurious for the most discriminating of residents. Ayala Land Premier calls it Ayala Greenfield Estates.

This 500-hectare development 30 minutes south of Alabang provides priceless views of nature's grandness anywhere you look. Each home is an intimate dwelling amidst landscaped grounds and flora, providing a magnificent backdrop to any family scene. Most importantly, the cool mountain breezes of Mt. Makiling comfort both mind and body.

Clearly, Ayala Greenfield Estates' range of amenities and conveniences are distinct from any other subdivision development because they are set amid the wonders of Mother Nature. A 15-hectare Nature Park with picnic groves and other amenities such as an open playfield, tree groves, hike and bike trails, a skating rink, a fishing lagoon and camp and picnic sites, provide more than the usual community playground for your children to enjoy.

The Village Clubhouse is the perfect spot for bigger social gatherings with neighbors and friends. With different-sized social halls, function rooms and even a coffee shop, you can easily share an idle chat with visitors from the metro or have that much-awaited reunion with relatives from all over the world. The renowned natural beauty of Mt. Makiling will serve as an endless conversation piece.

Most importantly, for the discerning golf enthusiast, the Ayala Greenfield Estates' 18-hole, all-weather, championship golf course created by world-renowned golf course designer Robert Trent Jones Jr. will surely challenge golfers of all skill levels. Each round is a unique gaming experience because the course is skillfully designed according to the lay of the land — feel the challenge of overcoming obstacles presented by the meandering hills and natural slopes of the mountains. This sprawling golfer's haven is exclusive to you and fellow Ayala Greenfield Estates residents, making daily life a true envy of your friends.

Living in Ayala Greenfield Estates is being seamlessly integrated with the flow of nature — a respite from stressful city living, which many Filipinos both here and abroad truly look for in a home. Owning a piece of nature at Ayala Greenfield Estates is the closest you can get to a perfect reward for those who have become accustomed to the best that life has to offer.

Developed by Ayala Greenfield Development Corporation, the Ayala Greenfield Estates community is managed by Ayala Land Premier, the name for the best high-end real-estate developments in the Philippines. With Ayala Land Premier's innovative designs, exceptional engineering, and superior property management, you are assured of a distinctive home that possesses value over time, with daily conveniences and needs well-anticipated and taken care of for an unmatched, worry-free lifestyle.

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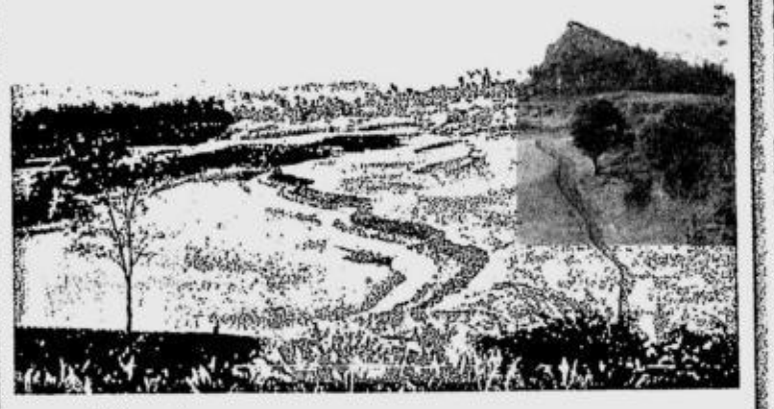
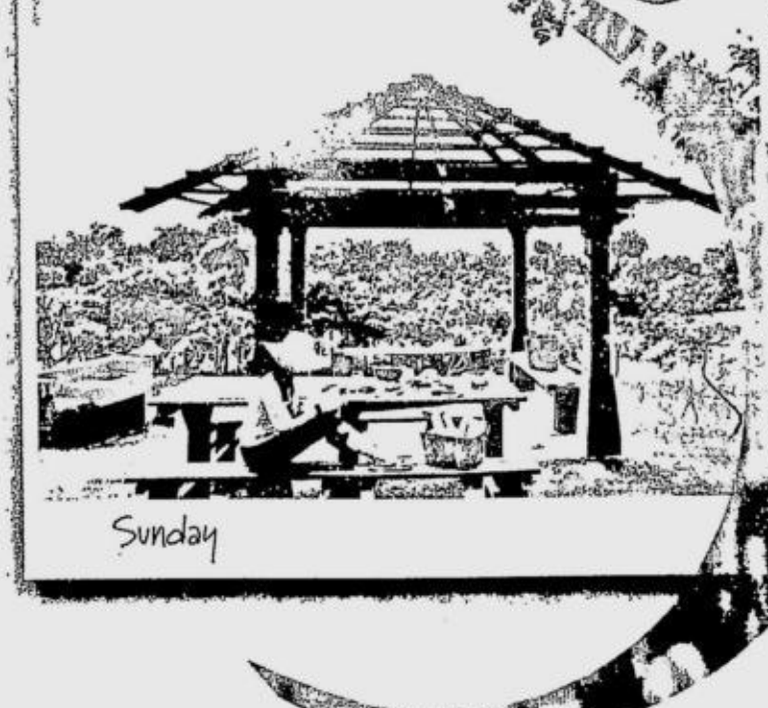
The expansive playgrou



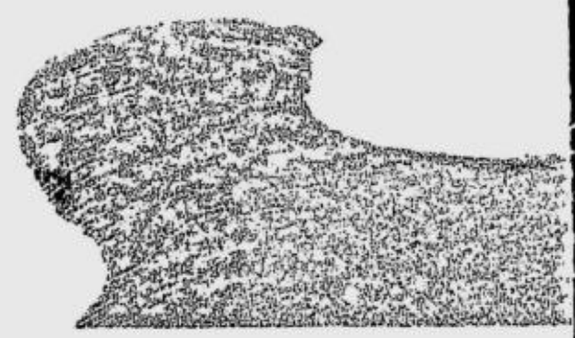
Monday

Thursday



Sunday

Nature at its best at Ayala Greenfield Estates



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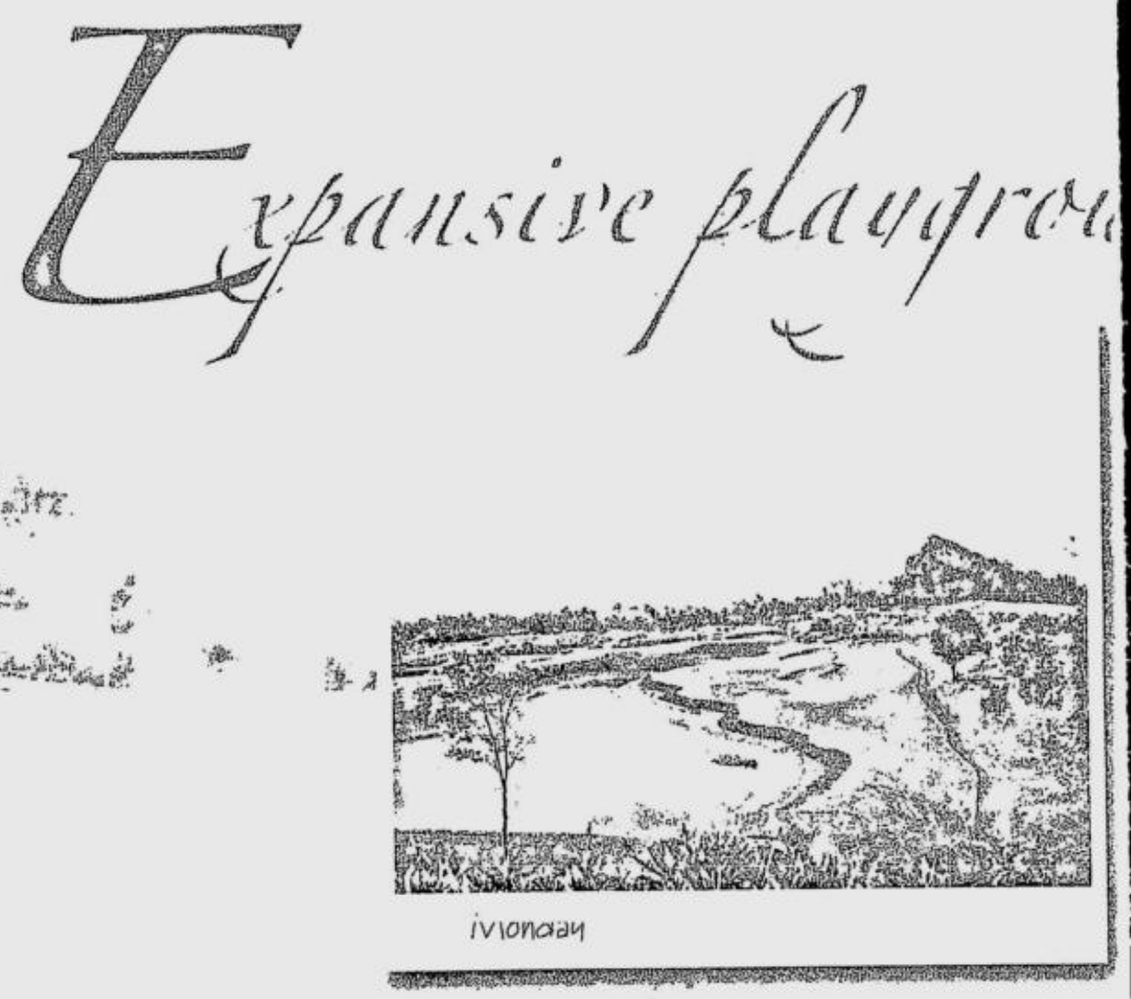
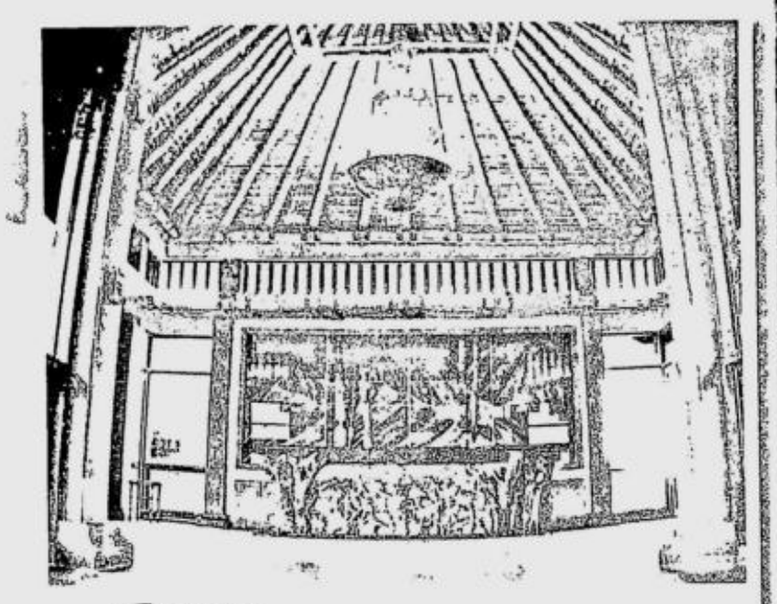


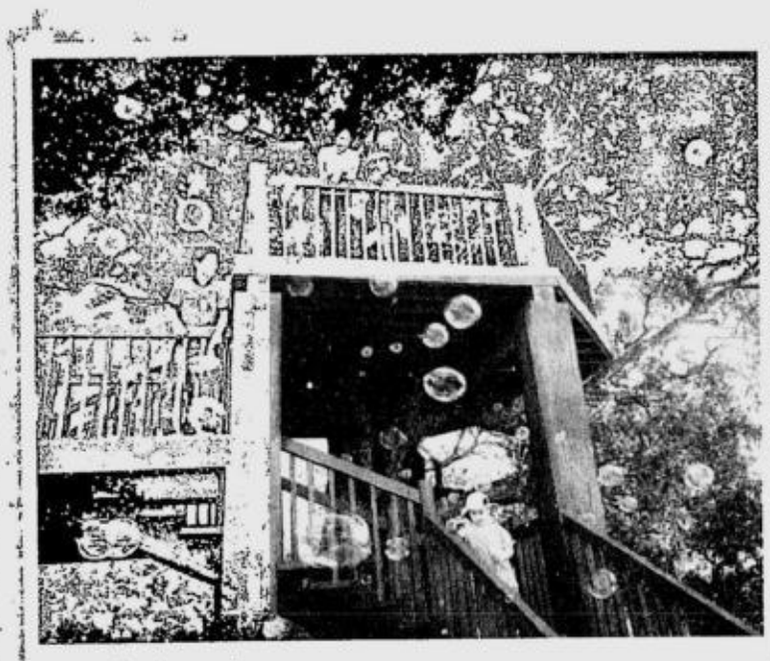


RETAKE OF PRECEDING FRAME

AyalaLandPremier

...nd.

Tuesday



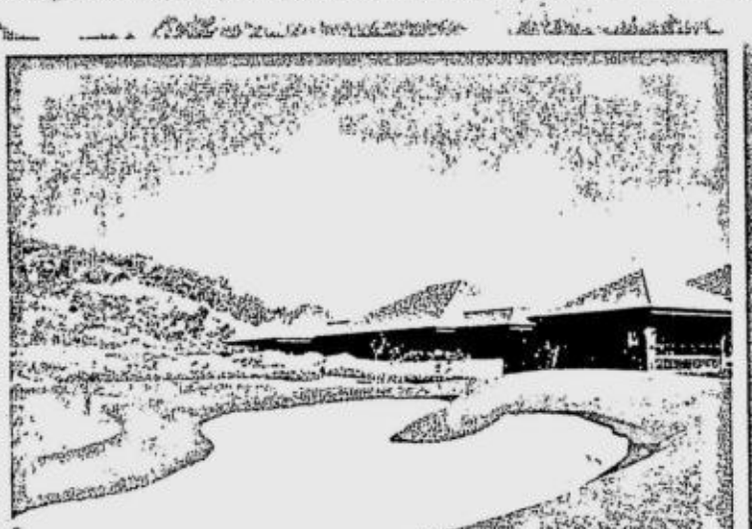
Wednesday

When was the last time you had so much wonderful space to play in? Now, you can lose yourself in it every single day.

Come and play at the backdrop of shimmering Laguna de Bay, as well as all the other jewels that make Ayala Greenfield Estates so special:

- An all-weather, 18-hole, par 72 golf course designed by the acclaimed Robert Trent Jones II
- A 15-hectare nature park dotted with ornamental gardens and tree groves
- A multitude of hiking and biking trails
- Delightful campsites, fishing lagoon and picnic areas
- Multi-purpose playfield
- Village Clubhouse that features a social hall, infinity pool, gym and game rooms
- View deck and view corridor with a breathtaking vista of Laguna de Bay, Mt. Makiling and Tagaytay Ridge
- Sports facilities that include indoor and outdoor basketball, badminton and tennis courts

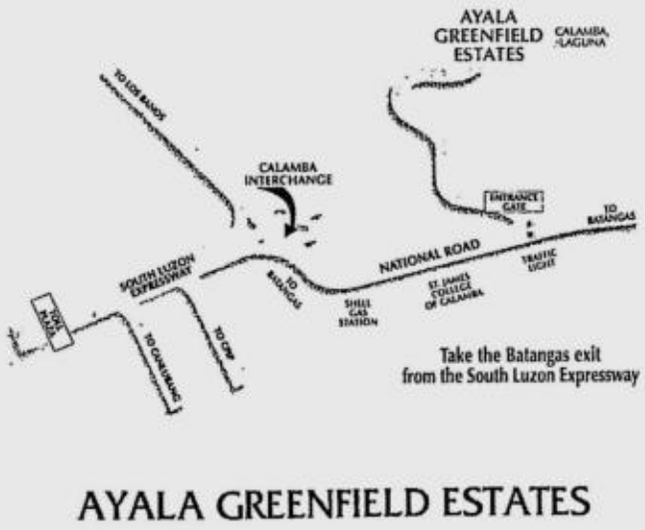
Any day is a perfect day to come for a visit. It only takes 30 minutes from Alabang to get to this most enchanting place.



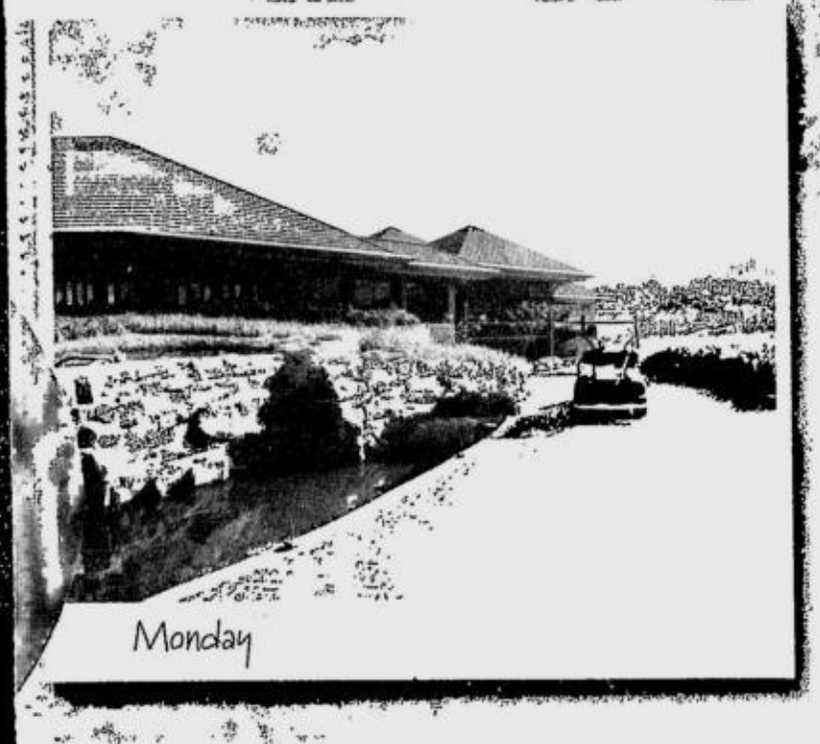
Friday

Saturday

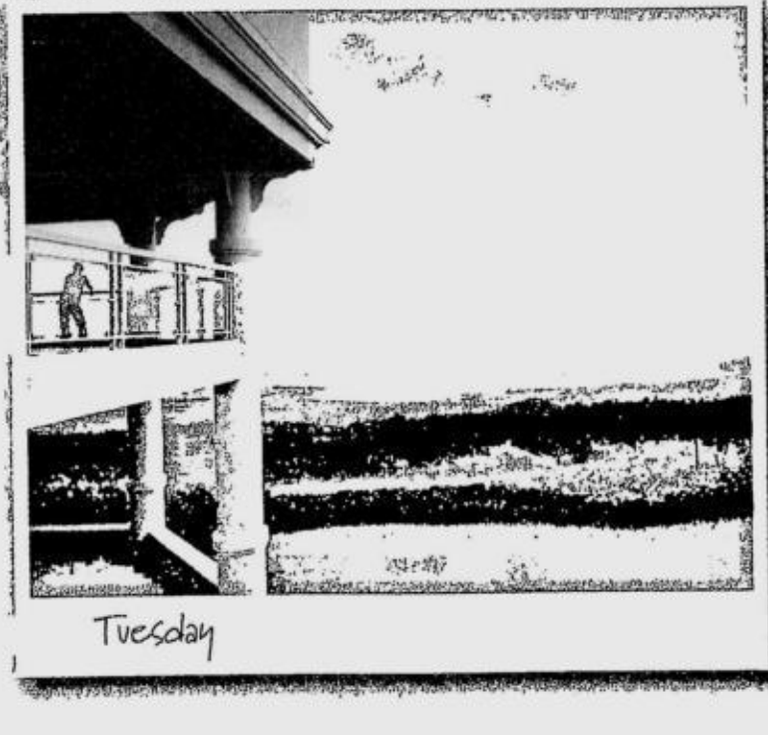
To arrange for a guided tour of Ayala Greenfield Estates, please call for a representative at 728-7000, log on to ***www.ayalagreenfieldestates.com*** or e-mail ***ask@ayalalandpremier.com***



Take the Batangas exit from the South Luzon Expressway



Monday



Tuesday

AYALA GREENFIELD ESTATES

HLURB License to Sell No. 0016-R4-00-01; 02968-R4-01-06; 05605-R4-02-08; 10241-R4A-04-06; 12530-R4A-05-06 and 16262-R4A-06-08.

Baby, you can drive my car

MIKEE Cojuangco-Jaworski, Jaime Zobel de Ayala, Wig Tysmans, Jojo Guingona, Pancho Escaler, Emil Davocol, TJ Davocol (aide of Emil), Quincy Castillo, National Artist Ben Cabrera, Bien Bautista

PRESIDENT Tea House Restaurant manager Judy Quan and staff in Chinatown

INQUIRER columnist Winnie Monsod and Carol Sy

From page C1

dent will as well.

Sipping Esser Napa Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay wines from the Wine Club, an elegant crowd milled around and admired the exhibit. An interesting note is that the car security is hooked up all the way to their offices in Germany. Of course, no one can carnap these artworks anyway, because there's no gas in the cars! But I still made sure I didn't set off any alarms as cool friend and photographer **Willy Saw** took my photo "behind the velvet ropes" to get me closer to the Roy Lichtenstein BMW 320i.

From the groovy '70s to New Wave '80s and now, '90s grunge, the BMW Art Car Collection is a depiction of the cultural trends of our era. The collection has been showcased in prominent museums such as the Louvre in Paris and the Royal Academy in London.

HSBC lunar year gig

There have been numerous changes of the guards in the corporate world lately. Sorely missed was former HSBC CEO **Warner Manning** at this year's HSBC Fire Boar Chinese New Year Party. The new CEO, **Mark Watkinson**, has quickly filled in Warner's extra-large shoes, treating the premier corporate clients of the bank to a lavish banquet, photo galleries and well-staged, traditional Chinese opera song numbers.

The entrance to the Makati Shang Ballroom was festooned with scenes from a Chinese Emperor's court, where guests could pose with a fully adorned emperor and empress. I heard the host calling out the winners of the Best in Chinese costume as I entered the affair, late as usual. My modern Chinese attire, by creative designer **Patrice Ramos-Diaz**, won a table prize for most number of red items.

ALL IN THE FAMILY. Peping Cojuangco, Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski and Ina Guingona

HAPPY shoppers Jackson Hong, Johnson Yao, Popsie Gamboa and Jojo Ongsiako

HENRY Sy Sr., Zobel de Ayala and Escaler

'Feng-shui' watch

Together with all my Chinese accessories was my new, cute piggy-strapped Swatch watch from Gift Gate Queen **Virgie Ramos**. She brought the special-edition Chinese New Year Swatch watches to my Kung Hei Fat Choi party last month. Aside from her prizes, World of Feng Shui compasses, fortune cookies and delicious-smelling Cereo candles were also given away. For a pretty touch, Kartini Flora in Alabang Town Center (tel. 8074356 and 8077579) provided beautiful floral arrangements.

To get my house all decked out, I headed to Chinatown with Batch '81 classmates **Jojo Ongsiako** and birthday girl **Popsie Gamboa**. Filled with jade charms, *tikoy*, *kiat-kiat* and golden piggy banks, we navigated around Divisoria with my personal shopper, **Johnson Yao**. He was amazed I knew more about *feng shui* than he did.

Knit empress

One of the partygoers was knit empress **Lulu Tan-Gan**. She is one of the exciting concept-store merchants opening in Greenbelt 5 later this year. Her wrinkle-free, comfy-yet-luxurious resort wear, L Ltd., is the ultimate haute holiday wardrobe integrating knit threads of cotton and rayon. That evening, at the opening cocktails at Greenbelt 3, Lulu explained to me how difficult it was to weave that fabric and come up with high-style, resort-inspired creations. This free-spirited designer has, indeed, built herself a fashion niche in knits!

Fantastic 8

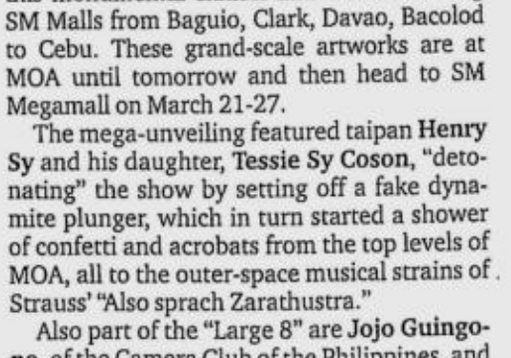
From art cars to fashion art to mall art, an exhibit of super-sized photo abstractions called "Large 8" is being displayed at the super-sized-as-well SM Mall of Asia. Eight esteemed photographers, including National Artist for Visual Arts **Ben Cabrera**, have collaborated on this monumental exhibit that will be touring SM Malls from Baguio, Clark, Davao, Bacolod to Cebu. These grand-scale artworks are at MOA until tomorrow and then head to SM Megamall on March 21-27.

The mega-unveiling featured taipan **Henry Sy** and his daughter, **Tessie Sy Coson**, "detonating" the show by setting off a fake dynamite plunger, which in turn started a shower of confetti and acrobats from the top levels of MOA, all to the outer-space musical strains of Strauss' "Also sprach Zarathustra."

Also part of the "Large 8" are **Jojo Guingona**, of the Camera Club of the Philippines, and **Jaime Zobel**, who I'm sure would love to have the tour visit his family's own Ayala Malls. Each of the eight are veritable artists on their own, so it was amazing to see how all had cooperated, shedding their individual egos, all in the light of a higher purpose—art for art's sake.

If life were to imitate art, perhaps we might see, in a similar fashion, the front pages filled with stories about cooperation and the shedding of egos, all for the higher purpose of nation-building. Now that would be something to see!

E-mail me at seaprincess@inquirer.com.ph



HSBC SVP and Marketing and Product Development head Suresh Nanoo; Mega's Lorraine Belmonte; and HSBC SVP and Personal Financial Services head Martin Cook

LARONG PINOY
Pawis Iwas sa
Johnson's® baby powder

Tuloy-tuloy na presko
sa Larong Pinoy, Pawis Iwas sa Johnson's Baby Powder
Tuloy-tuloy ang saya ng luksong tinik, sipa, tumbang preso at patintero.

PALARO SCHEDULE

March 10	Sta. Cruz, Manila Poblacion, Makati Sucat, Muntinlupa	March 31	Marikina City San Jose City Bicol Molino, Cavite	April 28	Calamba, Laguna Cebu City Valenzuela, Bulacan Cainta, Rizal
March 17	GMA, Cavite Fairview, Quezon City Lucena, Quezon Pasig City	April 14	San Fernando, Pampanga Davao City Bacolod City Cabanatuan City	May 5	Rosario, Pasig Iloilo Dagupan
March 24	Baguio City Dasmariñas, Cavite Pembo-Cembo, Makati City Pulang-Lupa, Las Piñas	April 21	Muntinlupa Antipolo Cagayan De Oro Abad Santos, Manila	May 19	San Pedro, Laguna Batangas City Pasig City La Union

SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 2007

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Sunday LIFESTYLE

For feedback, e-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Website: www.inquirer.net/lifestyle

Text us your feedback:
inquirer life name/age/city/message to
2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Church tours

THE PARISH of San Isidro Labrador in Cuenca

SIMBAHAN ng Tanauan

MEDITATE ON THE SUFFERINGS OF Christ through the Way of the Cross on Holy Thursday, April 5, in the historic province of Batangas.

Visit seven ancestral churches including the San Sebastian Cathedral in Lipa City with its ceiling of painted panels and the façade restored to its 1877 appearance; Our Lady of Caysasay Shrine, which houses the Virgin Mary's image that appeared in the area in 1603; the parish of San Isidro Labrador in Cuenca with its Gothic elements; the Taal Church, declared a national shrine in 1974; and the Simbahan ng Tanauan with its portico in Romanesque and classic styles.

Participants can choose between the P1,200 package without lunch or the P1,500 package with lunch in Taal Bistro. Five air-conditioned coasters are available for the tour (tel. 4260093 and 4366581, mobile numbers 0917-8274582 or 0917-5270606).

Bulacan, Pampanga churches

A Lenten tour of the churches of Bulacan and Pampanga will be held on Maundy Thursday, April 5.

Organized by Inscribe Tours (8405912 or 5758370), the itinerary in Bulacan includes the church of Sta. Maria rebuilt by Franciscan friars in 1892 after it was destroyed; Sta. Monica in Angat, a masterpiece of Baroque architecture whose interiors are considered one of the most beautiful in the country; and the heritage town of Bustos, where ancestral houses of revolutionaries still stand.

In Pampanga, considered the culinary center of the Philippines, first stop is Angeles City for lunch, church visits and *pasalubong* shopping.

Buffet lunch will be at the Holiday Inn Clark Field Resort. Three churches will then be visited—Immaculate Conception Parish, Holy Rosary Cathedral and Carmelite Convent. Last stop is Guagua church, one of the oldest in Pampanga and an architectural gem, with interiors done in the Ionic style and exteriors in Doric.

Travel photo contest

Cebu Pacific (CEB) and its in-flight magazine, Smile, celebrate the airline's 11th anniversary with a photo competition.

Eleven prizes, one for every year of CEB, will be given away.

Just e-mail (cebu.ed@ink-publishing.com) your favorite photograph taken at any Cebu Pacific destination for a chance to fly for free and see your photos on the next issue of Smile. The caption should indicate where the picture was taken and why you like it.

You may also send by snail mail to: Smile Photography Competition, Ink Publishing, 97B Amoy St., Singapore, 069917. Deadline is March 31 and winners will be published in the June/July 2007 issue of Smile. The airline's website is www.cebusmile.com.

Tourism promoter

Matabungkay Beach Resort and Hotel is a traditional prime destination in Lian, Batangas. Several of its guests have returned year after year for a tranquil vacation and to enjoy water sports or just bask in the peaceful environment. The only resort in the area accredited by the Department of Tourism, Matabungkay (tel. 7525252, 8193080, 7516883-85; www.matabungkay.net) is active in promoting domestic tourism, especially in southern Luzon.

Five-star hospitality

Qatar Airways showcased its award-winning five-star hospitality at Fitur, the first big tourism event of the year which was held in Madrid. Fitur is one of the biggest tourism fairs in the world and the most important exhibition for Latin America. The airline gave Spaniards and other travel fair guests a glimpse of its expansion plans that will include routes like Bali, Indonesia; Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam; and Chennai, India. For Filipinos, Qatar Airways can fly them to Madrid and the rest of Europe via Doha.

Special graduation offer

The Bellevue is having a Graduation Promo March 15-April 15 (tel. 7718181). For P4,500+ on weekdays and P4,000+ on weekends, new graduates can avail of deluxe room accommodation. The package includes buffet breakfast for two, unlimited broadband Internet access, two bottles of mineral water daily, welcome fruit platter, etc.

Graduates also get a 15-percent discount in food and beverage outlets, free premium foot spa or aromatherapy hair treatment for every hair and makeup service at The Bellevue Salon, and a complimentary cake, among others.

Easter package for the family

Treat your family to a Great Easter Getaway Package at the Marco Polo Plaza (tel. 8454574 in Manila and 032-2531111 in Cebu) in Cebu City April 4-9. Enjoy a two-night stay for P7,900 net or a three-night stay for P10,900 net, inclusive of daily breakfast plus a choice of either a buffet dinner or Sunday brunch for two. Go on a Visita Iglesia on Maundy Thursday to the Mabolo Church, Sacred Heart Parish and the 400-year-old Sto. Niño Church. Transportation will be provided by the hotel. Join the Way of the Cross at the Celestial Gardens on Good Friday, and the Salubong and Easter Mass at the hotel lobby on Easter Sunday. Fun activities will be organized for children, including an Easter Egg hunt.

E570

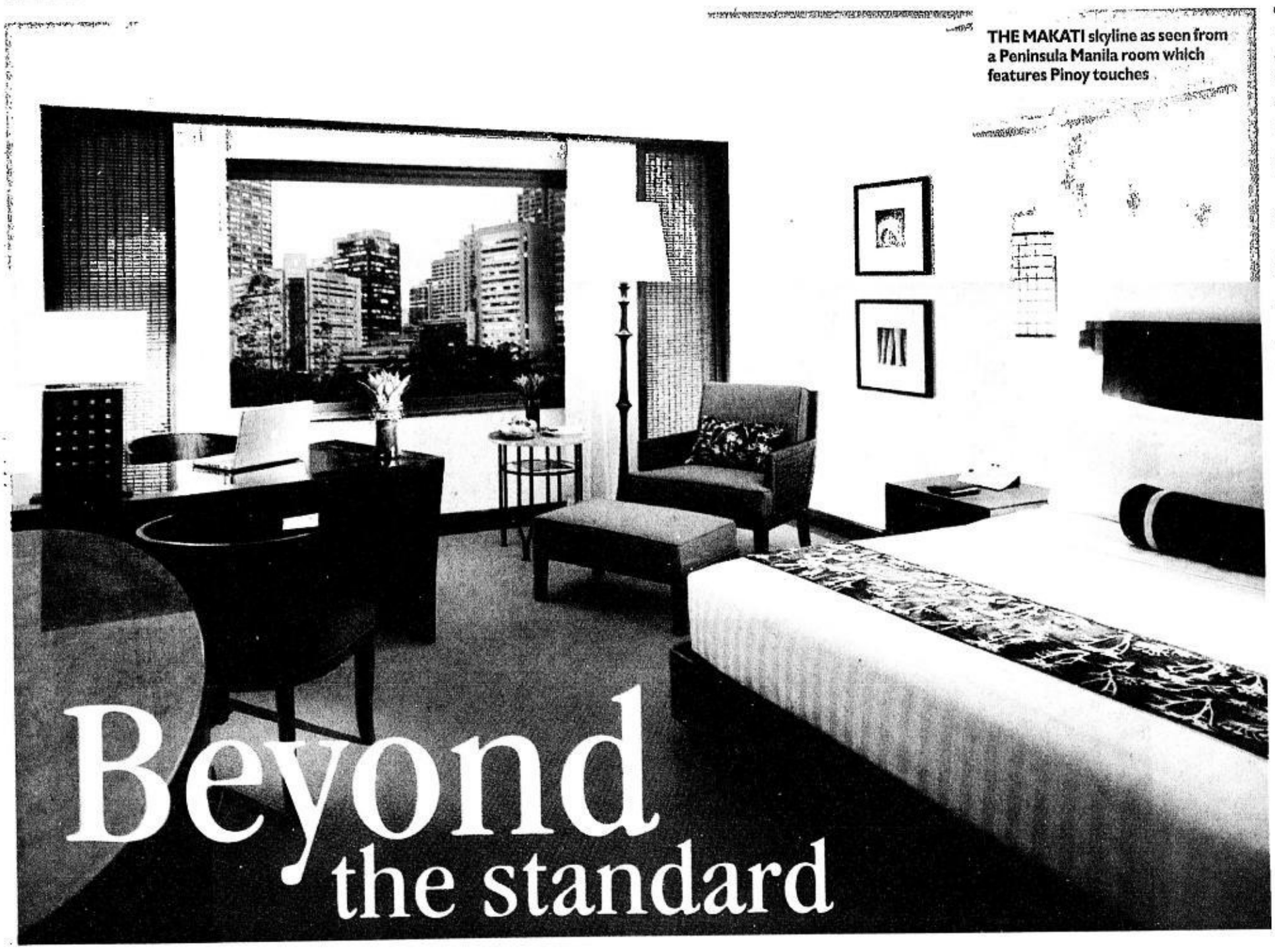
imagine femininity coupled with character.

Ladies, embrace your feminine side fully and confidently. With the Samsung E570's Women's Life features that can help you choose your perfume and adds up the calories of your meals, you know it's not just lip service. There's even a built-in pedometer that counts your paces and keeps your fitness plan on track. The elegant motif on the back of the phone is almost a little secret between you and your compact companion. With Samsung E570, it's not that hard to imagine.

- 1.3 Megapixel camera
- Tri-band/EDGE
- 65K TFT color screen
- *Bluetooth*™ connectivity
- External memory slot (microSD)
- MP3 Music player
- Video recording & messaging
- Women's Life (Fragrance Type, Calorie Counter, Pink Schedule, Bio-rhythm, Shopping List)
- Motion wallpaper (activated with a motion-sensitive animated puppy)

Samsung Customer Contact Center: TOLL FREE 1-800-10SAMSUNG for PLDT or 1-800-3SAMSUNG for Digitel.
ph.samsungmobile.com

SAMSUNG



THE MAKATI skyline as seen from a Peninsula Manila room which features Pinoy touches

Beyond the standard

The Peninsula Manila has broken out of the predictable mold to position its property as a world-class hotel that's both uniquely and unmistakably Filipino

FLAT-SCREEN TV is a t

By Alex Y. Vergara

HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIenced waking up with a start in the middle of the night in a supposedly familiar bedroom only to discover a bit later as you part the drapes that you're in a strange city hundreds of miles away from home? Dream over.

Frequent business travelers and peripatetic tourists who live their lives in suitcases know what we mean. Instead of giving their guests something new to marvel at, not a few hotel rooms have become bland replicas of their sister establishments half a world away.

In their desire to maintain a standard look, and eventually cut down on costs, not a few hotel chains the world over have adopted a cookie-cutter approach when it comes to interiors—from the chairs to the side tables, prints to the drapes, wall papers to the carpets, lamp shades to the alarm clocks.

LOCALLY made divider at the executive lounge

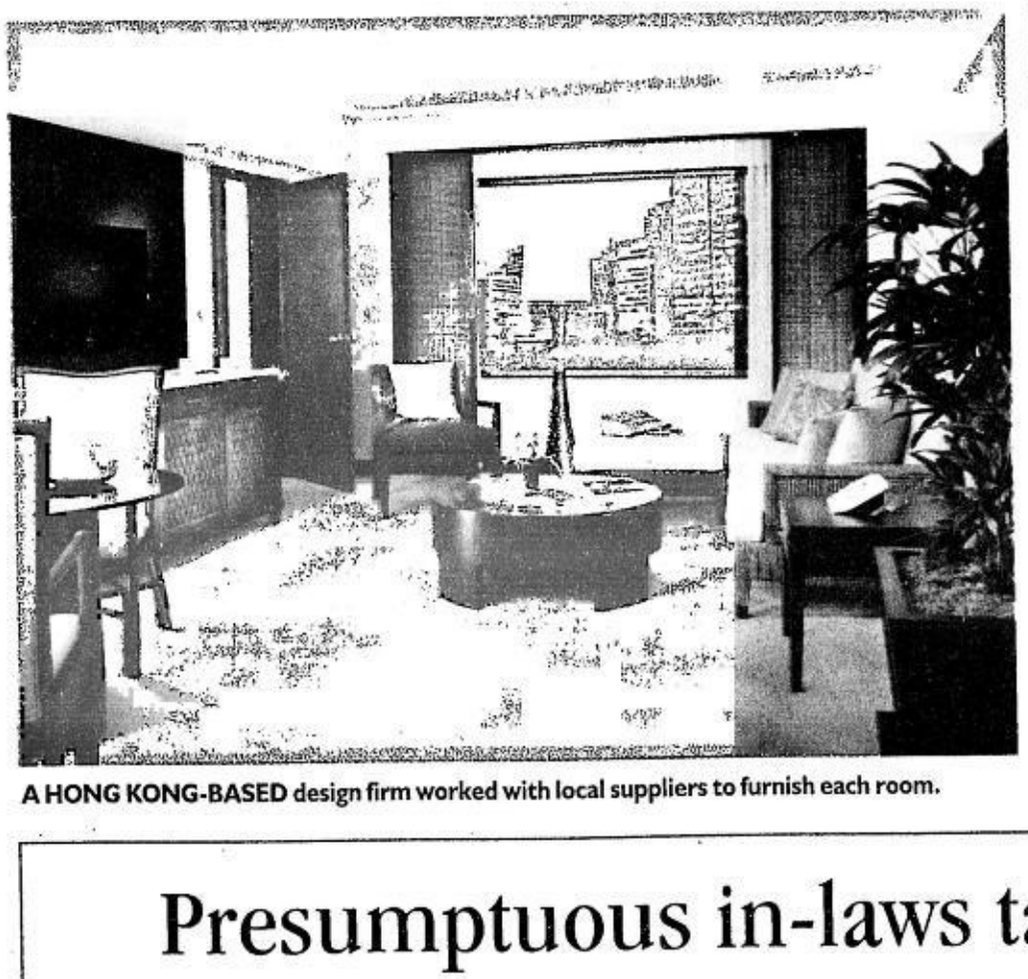
It doesn't matter if the overall look is Mediterranean, Scandinavian or modern Asian, the truth is such aesthetics often go beyond bedrooms to include such public areas as corridors, lobbies, swimming pools, gardens, and sometimes even gyms.

Such a tried-and-tested approach, although comforting for some, can be quite boring and monotonous to many, especially to jaded and adventurous travelers. Indeed, never has the phrase "hotel look" gained such a derisive meaning.

In their desire to play safe, hotels also deprive guests of experiencing, if only within the confines of their bedrooms, a sample of the local flavor unique and endemic in a particular city or country.

With the recent renovation of its lobby and bedrooms that make up the hotel's Makati tower, the Peninsula Manila has broken out of this predictable mold to position its property as a world-class hotel that's both uniquely and unmistakably Filipino.

At the same time, the hotel has beefed up a number of creature comforts and amenities to further pamper guests. In keeping with its new interiors, for instance, it equipped each of its room with a sleek plasma TV.



A HONG KONG-BASED design firm worked with local suppliers to furnish each room.

THE warm, Filipino look extends to public areas such as the dining place in the executive lounge.

Presumptuous in-laws take control of couple's property

Emily's Post
Emily Marcelo

DEAR EMILY,

There's a saying that "parents-in-law, sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law are outlaws." I guess nobody would disagree with this statement, except for a few.

We lived in a compound for more than 10 years with my husband's parents and sister as neighbors. When my husband was offered to work abroad we decided to padlock our house and I lived with my own mother in the province.

We left our things for safe keeping with our parents-in-law. Recently we acquired another house in my birthplace and my in-laws learned of this.

Since our first house was vacant and padlocked, this sister of my husband's wrote us about the plight of one of their brothers who's married and jobless and whom she was supporting.

While none of my husband's other brothers volunteered to support their jobless sibling, this sister asked my husband to extend help.

They talked by long distance and one of the plans was to rent out our house and give the monthly payment to this jobless brother. The other plan was to give them a one-time cash assistance.

These were all in the planning stage but this sister decided to implement immediately the first option without giving us time to approve or disapprove.

My husband and I know that this brother is lazy and a truant, among other things. We sent his sister a text message saying we decided on the cash assistance instead of letting our house be rented.

She begged us not to overturn her decision because she said she would not have the money to support the jobless brother. We were shocked to find out recently that the brother secretly rented out our house to a couple without informing us and without a contract of lease.

My husband's siblings were clearly in cahoots and tried to deceive us. Because of this, we decided to stop communicating with them.

Is there anything we can do?

MD

First, are you positive that this house in the compound is under your and your husband's name? Second, did your husband have a written agreement with this sister regarding any of his plans?

If he did, did you also give your consent as his wife and signed the agreement, too?

Our interpersonal connections with relatives and friends in the Philippines are so casual and so devil-may-care that most of us take many things for granted.

One example is what your husband's relatives did to your house.

Just because it was empty and you did not seem to need money from it, this jobless brother unashamedly rented it out and, with nary a by-your-leave to you and your husband, appropriated the rental for himself as well.

According to a lawyer, if the documents for the house are all in order, you and your husband can file an action "for unlawful detainer" against this sister and brother who are using your property for purposes other than what was authorized by you.

What is it about this brother-in-law that is making him dependent on his siblings for support? Is he infirm? Is he differently abled? Illiterate? Is not there anything he can do to support himself and his family. What about his wife. Is she debilitated as well? Could they be so down and out of luck to be both so helpless and unable to find work and earn anything at all?

Or are they on this mendicancy mode because they know that able-bodied, financially well-off siblings (meaning your husband and this sister) can provide for his family handily?

Tsk, tsk ... if that's the case, isn't that a terrible waste of resource—healthy, breathing, thinking individuals waiting at the sidelines for hand-outs?

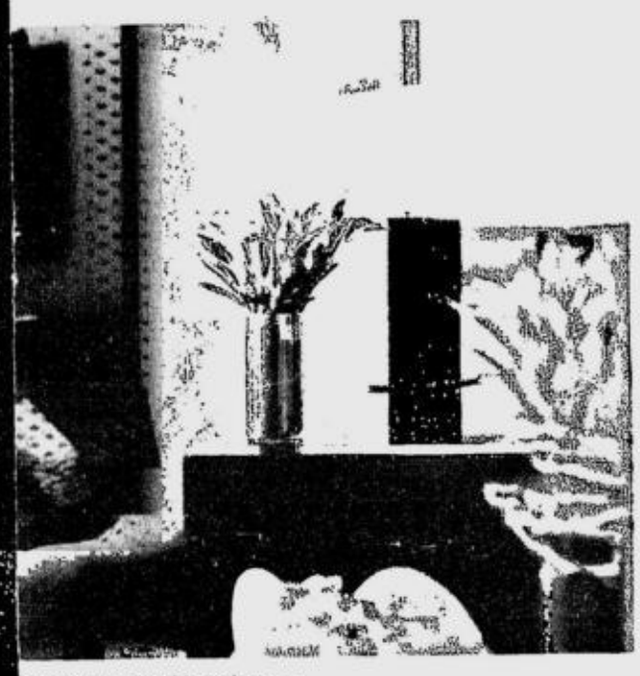
Beggars should at least have the decency not to bite the hand that feeds them, as this brother did to you and your husband.

Give them one last chance to explain what they did. Then, regain possession of your house. If everything else fails—sue them. They do not deserve your mercy.

E-mail the author at emarcelo @inquirer.com.ph, Subject: Lifestyle, or send your letters to INQUIRER. *Listen to Ms. Marcelo co-host the program "Kalikasan Vigilante," 7:15-8:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, on dwBR 104.3 FM.*

DARK wood and capiz elements

THE Peninsula Manila's Ayala tower (right) will undergo renovation sometime next year.



first in the local hotel scene.

More streamlined

The move of upgrading its TVs is reportedly the first of its kind among Philippine hotels. At the same time, the hotel opted for darker, more streamlined furniture pieces to go with the flat screen TV and give guests more legroom.

Complementing the overall look is a bedside panel with remote-control capabilities to adjust the room environment at the touch of a button.

"The overall look is Asian with plenty of Filipino elements thrown in," says Joseph Arias, the Peninsula Manila's public relations manager. "The move is in keeping with the Peninsula chain's global thrust of adding a dash of local flavor in each of its properties."

Each room at the Makati tower is now wrapped in warm wood and locally sourced rattan furniture, window treatments and accessories, including accent fabrics and a pair of wall sconces made of capiz.

"The old rooms were classified as neoclassical," says Denise Marie Olegario, a Peninsula reservations and revenue managers. "We call the new look of our rooms as timeless Filipino."

The hotel's designers also chucked generic prints of flora and fauna in favor of stylized photo collages taken by Filipino photographers Jorem Catilo and Sheila Juan.

The pair's images feature Philippine sceneries, rural life, handicrafts and a bit of pop art not found in any other hotel room both here and abroad.

"The photographers' works won in a photo contest we held last year," says Olegario. "Our foreign guests find the images fascinating. Not a few Filipino guests, especially *balikbayans*, view them with pride."

But no matter what their nationalities are, she adds, frequent guests find the Peninsula Manila's new rooms "different, comfortable and free from clutter."

The room renovation began in April and ended in December. Hotel executive declined to give a price tag. Similar work on the Ayala tower will begin sometime next year.

The hotel chain tapped the services of Hong Kong-based Chhada Siembieda Leung Ltd., the same design company responsible for renovating its property in Beijing. In turn, the design company worked with a local firm to help it source for raw materials and furniture pieces.

With such a development, guests have more reasons to stay awake longer and bask in the unique look and features of their rooms before being completely lulled to sleep in cozy surroundings that mirror Filipino warmth and style at their best.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

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and Teachings of Ascended Masters
by: The Temple of The Presence, Inc

Mar 16 (6-9pm), Mar 17 (9-12pm; 2-5pm)
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Registration: P100 (includes snacks)
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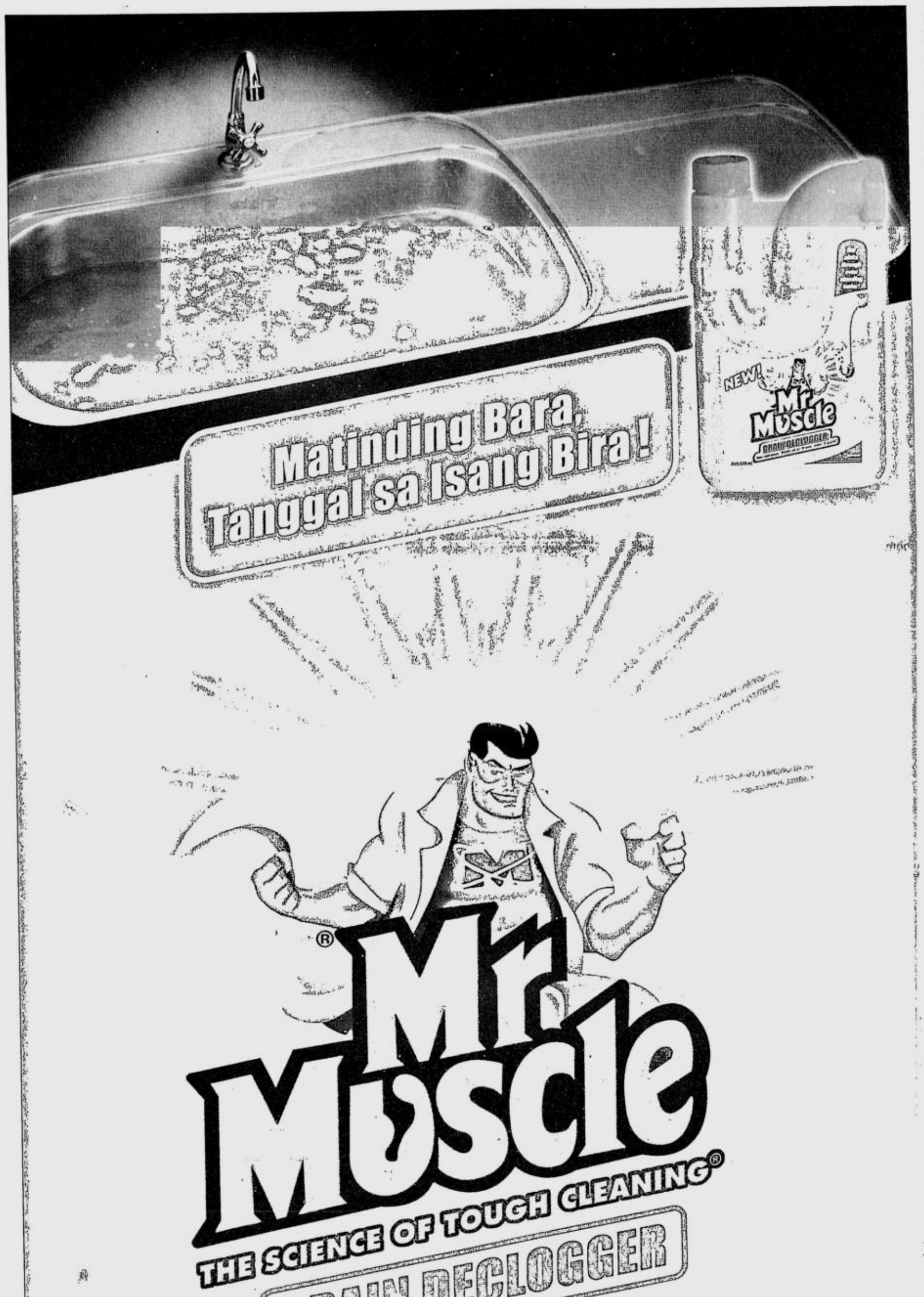
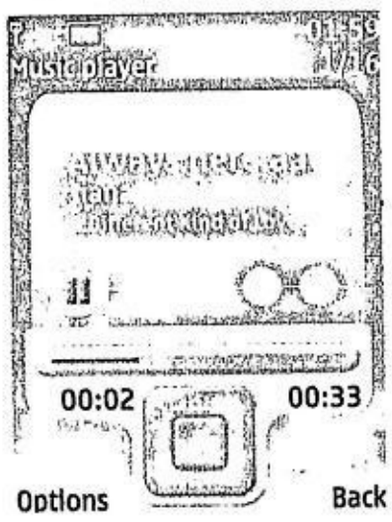


Nokia 5300 XpressMusic: Keeping You In Tune To Life's Music

From the Beatles to the Backstreet Boys; analogue recordings to crisp electronic sounds; crackling vinyl to mp3 – music and mobile communication has come, as Fatboy Slim put it, "a long, long way together." Mobile phones have evolved from being talk tools to tools that let you do more than just talk, they let you sing along too.



Enjoying music in the 21st century is all about taking your music wherever you go and being able to share it with others. Nokia is right on top of the charts with the Nokia 5300 XpressMusic, a mobile music wonder that allows you to do just that, and more.

The Nokia 5300 XpressMusic saves you the trouble of lugging your entire CD collection wherever you go. This li'l baby can easily store up to 1,500 tracks on a 2GB microSD card.

"What makes this Nokia 5300 XpressMusic even more fun is that it has dedicated music keys that lets you have background music while you text or browse... capture clear and crisp photos of great moments with its 1.3 megapixel camera."

That's about 75 CDs combined! It also has a built in FM radio letting you really enjoy your choice of music wherever you are, and whenever you want to.

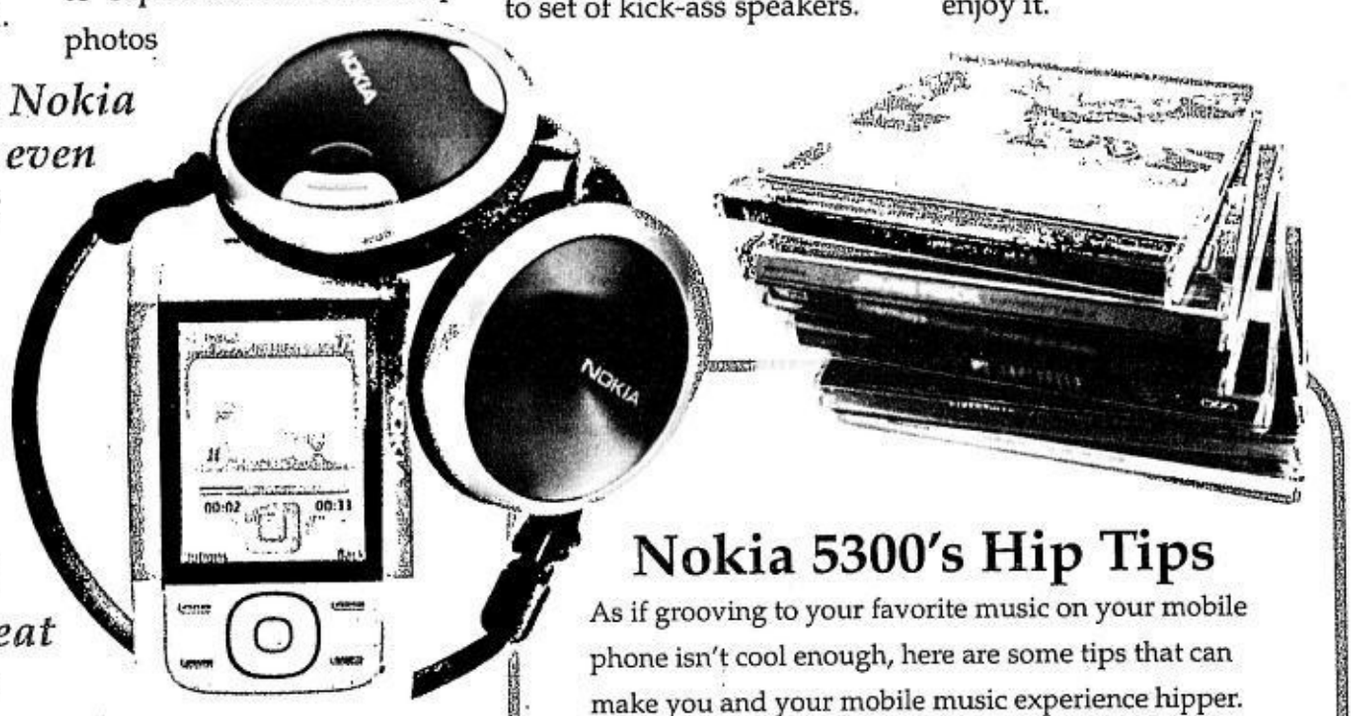
What makes this Nokia 5300 XpressMusic even more fun is that it has dedicated music keys that let you have background music while you text or browse.

Aside from grooving to your favorite tunes, the Nokia 5300 XpressMusic also allows you to capture clear and crisp photos of great moments with its 1.3 megapixel camera.

Making a soundtrack to your life is even easier using the Nokia Music Manager. Copy songs from your CD collection, organize into playlists then transfer your music library from your PC to your Nokia 5300.

When silence starts to become deafening, you can also plug in the Nokia 5300 XpressMusic to music optimized headsets, or share the joy by connecting it to set of kick-ass speakers.

That's definitely going to get the party started! The Nokia 5300 XpressMusic is a fun mobile device that makes you tune in to a new way of life. Plug it, play it, and enjoy it.



Nokia 5300's Hip Tips

As if grooving to your favorite music on your mobile phone isn't cool enough, here are some tips that can make you and your mobile music experience hipper.

1. Wake up to your favorite tune. Assign an mp3 file of your favorite song as your alarm tone.
2. Special songs for special people. Assign a special ringtone for special persons in your phonebook.
3. Your mood, your music. Create different playlists that will suit your different moods.
4. Album cover. Take a creative photo of yourself, together with your friends, and set it as your wallpaper.
5. Be creative. Find other fun and cool ways to enjoy music with your phone!

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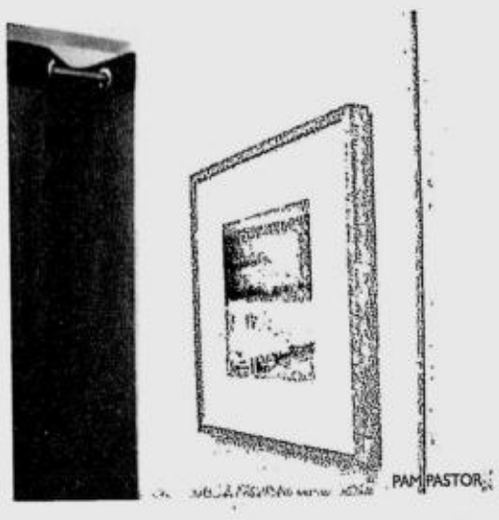
2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

AMY RAÑOLA

How's this for size?

INQUIRER Lifestyle tries on the fitting rooms of top shops around Metro Manila and finds some quite ill-fitting


PAM PASTOR

By the Staff

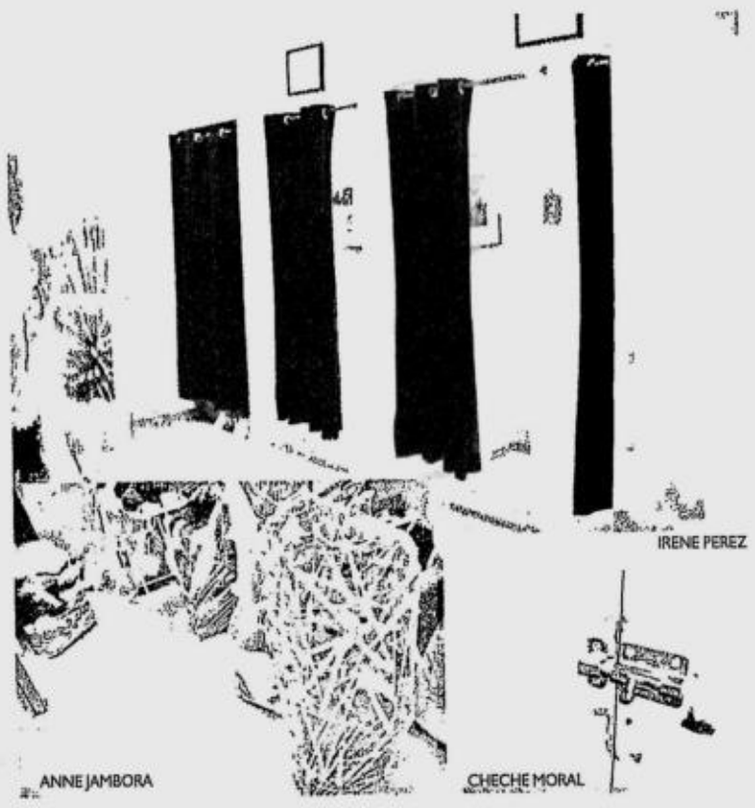
TRYING ON CLOTHES FOR size is as much a part of the whole shopping experience as the hunt and the ultimate purchase. The trip to the dressing room can make or break the sale.

While some clothing retailers were thoughtful enough to take this into account—providing sufficient fitting rooms, with proper lighting and a helpful staff to assist you, plus a few other extras—others seem to have taken it as an afterthought or an unnecessary part of the trade.

As a service to our readers, Lifestyle set out to check popular shops and department stores to see what their fitting rooms were like. The criteria used were: size of the fitting room; cleanliness; basic amenities (hooks, shelves, locks, chairs); mirror and lighting; number of fitting rooms; and service. Each shop was rated for each category on a scale of 1-5, 1 being the poorest and 5, the most outstanding.

Note that only fitting rooms and services related to fitting were rated, not the merchandise. We hope rated retailers would take this as positive criticism and pay more attention to the state of their dressing rooms instead of just shrugging this off and staying focused only on making a profit.

Next Sunday: our reviews of more malls, department stores and the final scorecard.


IRENE PEREZ

ANNE JAMBORA CHECHE MORAL

"We're happy with Sun—we save 50% on our bills!"

Jeannie Dizon-Posas, General Manager, Dizon Farms

Dizon Farms would go bananas without the convenience and savings that Sun provides.

Sun has been helping Dizon Farms grow for three years now. It is a family-owned business that supplies produce to all the major supermarkets in the Philippines.

"Before switching to Sun, only a handful of our people had company phones," explains Jeannie. "Now we're all connected, so there's no excuse to run out of load or to lose contact."

Being in the food business, quality is top priority. Fruits and vegetables can easily get bruised in transit, or spoiled in storage. Good thing she can check on her outlets instantly—in Davao, Baguio, Cavite and Manila—ensuring that premium quality is always maintained—all thanks to Sun.

"If there are urgent concerns, we can act on them immediately," she says. Before switching to Sun, their employees were hesitant to call.

Now, she smiles, "It's easier to communicate and we're able to do more in less time—at half the cost!"

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DAVID'S SALON
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All the Way Cebuana Lhuillier
$5.00/USD discount on international outbound transactions only for a min. $12.00/USD transaction (not applicable to Jumbo Box, Jumbo Jr. and Express Pallet)

Goldilocks
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Free gift with a minimum purchase of Php125.00

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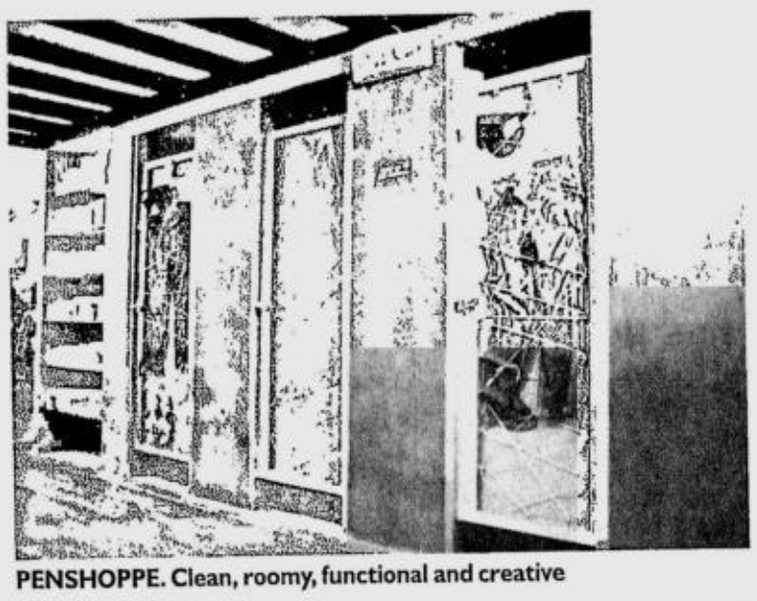
Selected shops, Robinson's Place, Manila	Bayo	Bench	Calvin Klein	Cinderella	Ensembles	Freeway	Folded & Hung	Guess	Kamiseta	Lacoste	Mango	Marks & Spencer	Penshoppe	Polo Sport Co. Ralph Lauren	People R People	Sari-Sari	Topshop
Size	****	****	****	***	*	**	*****	*****	**	***	***	*****	*****	*****	***	***	****
Cleanliness—absence of clutter, etc.	***	****	*****	***	*	***	*****	*****	***	****	****	*****	****	*****	**	*	****
Basic amenities—hooks, shelf, locks	**	****	*****	**	**	***	*****	*****	**	***	***	*****	****	*****	***	**	****
Mirror & lighting	****	****	*****	***	**	**	*****	*****	*	***	***	*****	****	*****	****	***	****
Quantity	*	****	***	***	**	***	****	*****	*	*	*****	*****	*****	*****	***	***	****

BAYO. The two fitting rooms are spacious but definitely not enough. Bundles of clothes block the whole area.

Some were nasty, some were nice—we're talking of fitting rooms in major malls



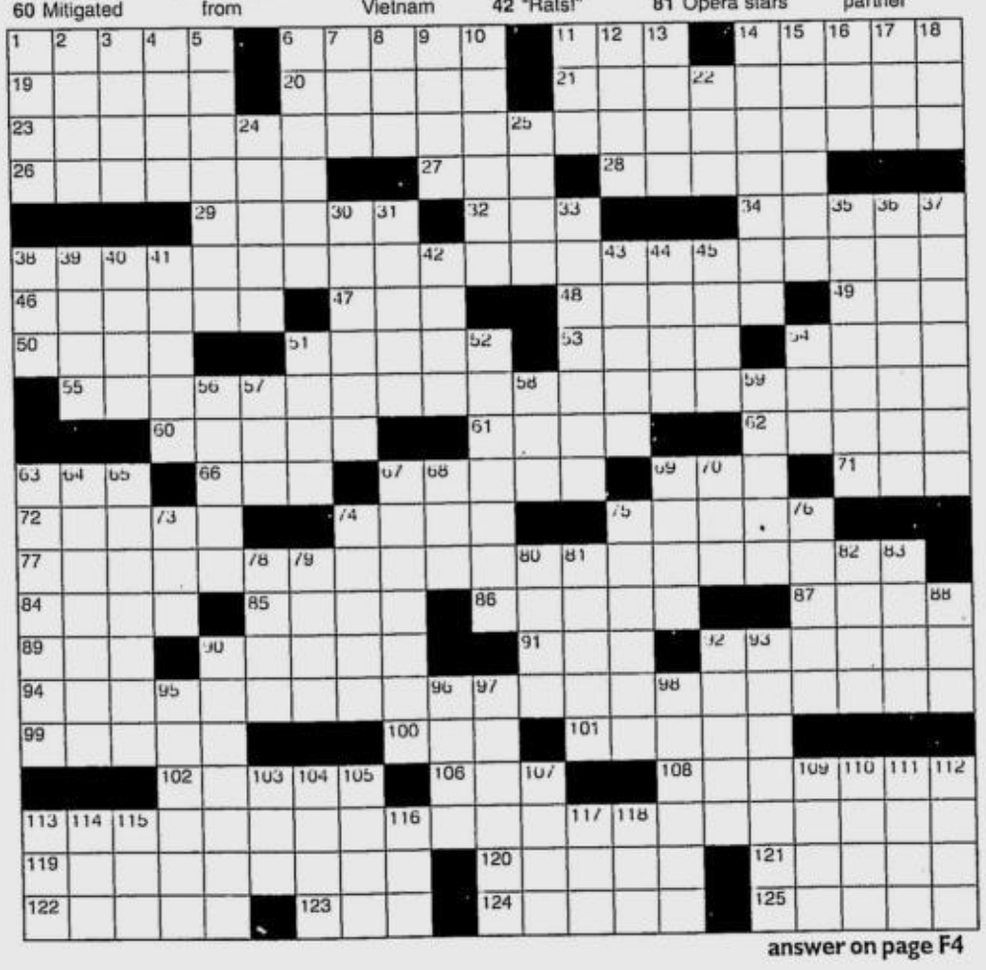
PENSHOPPE. Clean, roomy, functional and creative

SUNDAY CROSSWORD

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo — **PACKAGE**

ACROSS
1 Founded (on)
6 Leafy shelter
11 Ancient
14 Follow immediately
19 Preceder of "gesundheit"
20 Actress Lane
21 Train line
23 Start of a riddle
26 Tenants
27 Toledo Mrs.
28 Former German secret police
29 Fills to the gills
32 PC key
34 "... of thee —"
38 Riddle, part 2
46 Cleopatra's beloved
47 — Majesty
48 A vital sign
49 JFK guess
50 Amaze
51 Really get to
53 Thin strip of wood
54 Le Sage's "Gil —"
55 Riddle, part 3
60 Mitigated
61 Ivory or Zest
62 Navel variety
63 — Guevara
66 Alphabet concluder
67 Bricklayer
69 Mr. Potato Head piece
71 Moines or Plaines lead-in
72 Vowel sound in the word "meet"
74 Ration (out)
75 Old Navy alternative
77 Riddle, part 4
84 Stainer of Santa's coat
85 Winds up
86 Take for — (scam)
87 "— to differ"
89 Be off the mark
90 "To be — to be ..."
91 Twice LIII
92 More risque
94 End of the riddle
99 Thumbs-up votes
100 Cheer shout
101 Clip fleece from
102 Bicycle part
106 Spanish "two"
108 Church topper
113 Riddle's answer
119 Seat of Buncombe County, NC
120 Exec's belt attachment
121 Big arcade name
122 Vermont ski resort
123 Kenny G's instrument
124 Rock-filled
125 Hen, often

DOWN
1 Cry buckets
2 Workout woe
3 Tom Jones' "— a Lady"
4 A really long time
5 Loves a bit too much
6 "— Fideles" (yule carol)
7 Divested (of)
8 Limbo need
9 Obligation
10 Rue
11 Uneaten bit
12 Neighbor of Vietnam
13 Soil
14 Tending to wear down
15 Not at all
16 Producer of UV rays
17 All-terrain vehicle, briefly
18 Musket add-on?
22 Grassy field
24 Hard to lift
25 Band for Miss World
30 West German chancellor, 1963-66
31 Care for
33 Rotating hoisting apparatus on a ship
35 Cork locale
36 Singer Cole
37 Spectacles
38 "— Rheingold"
39 Gung-ho about
40 Double — (Oreo variety)
41 "The Godfather" actor Richard
42 "Rats!"
43 May bloomer
44 Serb, e.g.
45 Italy's Villa d'—
51 Foil's cousin
52 Mosaicist's tile
54 Poet Jonson
56 Humiliating frat brother
57 Suffix with Peking
58 Dove's call
59 Farm dads
63 Near
64 Mom, in mid-May
65 Recital bonuses
67 Ogre
68 Yodeling spot
69 Pilate's "Behold!"
70 Tate works
73 Fetch
74 Performed adequately
75 Mannerly Martin
76 Any — way
78 Alaska, once: Abbr.
79 — Domini
80 Gp. playing a symphony
81 Opera stars
82 Irish Rose's sweetheart
83 Feat
88 Miracle- —
90 Lay eyes on
92 Cowboy's rope
93 Gland by the kidneys
95 Sibling's son
96 Nothing, in Nogales
97 Beats badly
98 "— Rides Again" (classic western)
103 "Agnus —" (Mass prayer)
104 Hole-making tools
105 Tra- —
107 Small fight
109 Soul singer — James
110 Supplicate
111 Decoy
112 Omani VIP
113 Doesn't lack
114 PA hours
115 Despite the fact that, briefly
116 Singer Ritter
117 Conceit
118 Stimpy's partner



answer on page F4

ROBINSONS PLACE MANILA

Seeing yellow

Text and photos by Irene C. Perez

Bayo
There are only two fitting rooms, and there are probably a hundred items in the store. The rooms may be big, but you have to line up for a long time to get to them. The big bundles of clothes blocking the way to the rooms are distracting, too.

Bench
Each room has a ledge where you can put small bags. There are fitting rooms both for the HerBench and Bench side, so there's enough fitting time for everyone.

Cinderella
This is a better Cinderella branch than most. Rooms are ample although average in size, The staff is helpful and attentive.

Calvin Klein
CK has a ledge big enough for your personal stuff and items to be fitted, even for your groceries. It also has a bar for hangers so your clothes won't get wrinkled. These carpeted fitting rooms are just right for a brand that appeals more to the A-B crowd.

Ensembles
The only way to appreciate this branch is if you're no more than four-foot tall. The rooms are unusually tiny that you will have a hard time stretching your arms to fit a top, and the lights are turned off unless someone is inside.

Freeway
We wish Freeway had bigger cubicles and better lighting. The bulbs were so yellow here we could not really tell how the color of clothes fared with our skintone.

Folded & Hung
Floor-to-ceiling mirrors, high ceilings, great lighting, six fitting rooms for a small shop, a big ledge you can actually sit on when fitting pants—you just don't want to try on clothes at F&H Robinson's Place, you are pleased to buy 'em.

Guess
Six spacious, neat dressing rooms for a big shop are a delight. Salespersons are friendly and well-trained.

Kamiseta
The rooms are not enough for the hordes of *colegialas* trying out one piece after another. There's only one hook for all your stuff, and the drape curtains don't really provide full door-like coverage. Service and everything else, like the clothes, are average.

Lacoste
The rooms are neat and spacious; mirrors, hooks and locks work perfectly well, but we wish there were more than two fitting rooms in this Lacoste.

Mango
Mango is probably the only boutique in this mall that has more than 10 fitting rooms. This Spanish brand evidently knows how shopping-crazy Pinays are. We have a problem with the drape curtains that serve as doors, though. You wouldn't know if someone was in there trying on clothes, or they wouldn't know if you were inside doing the same. There's a big chance that someone could draw the curtains and catch you stark naked.

RALPH Lauren gives us the pampering expected from a designer brand.

PEOPLE R PEOPLE. The mini whiteboards with scribbles on it are just tacky...

... but it has enough space for your clothes, even your groceries.

Marks & Spencer
We love the six roomy cubicles with carpeted floors, multiple hooks and spotless mirrors. We also like the attentive staff. M&S fitting rooms could have been perfect—if they were not locked (for security reasons, they say). Asking the salesperson to open the door for us every time we want to try a garment on is a big turn-off.

Penshoppe
Penshoppe is a surprise. From the walls which remind us of a mixed-media piece to the very accommodating attendants (you could just stick your head out the door and ask them to get stuff for you while you're inside). Each cubicle is clean, roomy and well-equipped. What we like best are two full-length mirrors which allow us to see how the clothes fit on all angles. The functional red stool completes the whole Penshoppe fitting-room experience.

People R People
On the doors are tacky mini whiteboards with the following messages: "No food and drinks allowed" and "Three garments only." We were half-expecting to find a "*Bawal umihi dito*" warning somewhere. The rooms are ample and amenities are okay, but a certain cubicle is used as storage giving the area a very messy look. We love the big roomy ledge, though.

FOLDED & HUNG. We love this ledge which allows you to check how the pants fit while you're sitting.

CALVIN KLEIN. Fitting rooms fit for a high-end brand

Polo Sport Co. Ralph Lauren
The heavy curtain drapes, the marvelous lighting and the courteous staff remind us of being in a photography studio. They have a standee with hooks perfect for all your stuff, and a silver stool just in case you get tired. RL has perhaps the perfect fitting room. And we swear, the mirrors seem to make us look thinner.

Sari-sari
Sari-sari is very promising based on window display, but the fitting rooms are dark and dirty, not a very appealing combo for would-be buyers.

Topshop
Everything is average. Rooms are spacious and clean, there is enough space for your stuff, and we were glad of the multiple bars and hooks.

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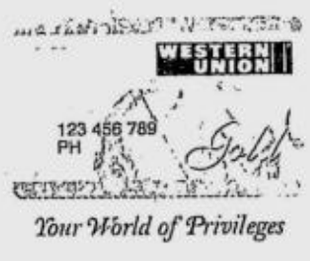

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* Free gift will change quarterly. Terms and conditions apply. Promo duration is from January 27, 2007 - December 31, 2007. See countertop teasers for details.

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LISA MACUJA-ELIZALDE, Ballet Manila directress, with summer workshop students

Enrollment for summer ballet begins March 17

ASPIRING BALLERINAS AND danseurs will get the chance to dance with the Philippines' foremost classical ballet company as Ballet Manila holds its 11th Summer Workshop, "Just Dance 10!" April 10-May 27.

Young people 18 years old and below could learn from two of the country's finest dancers—Lisa Macuja-Elizalde, BM's artistic director and principal ballerina, and Osias Barroso, artistic associate and ballet master.

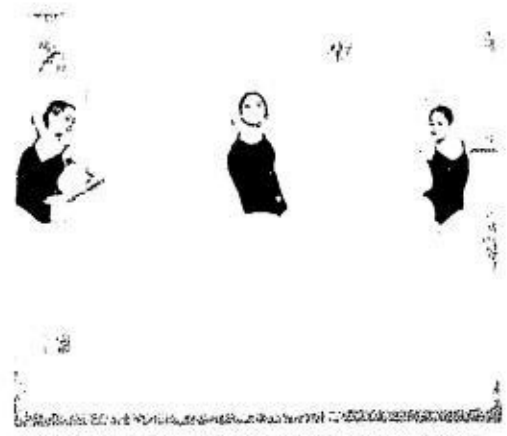
Now on its 11th season, BM's summer workshops have produced some of the country's fresh talents, like Christine Rocas, who has trained with the company since she was 10.

At 18, Rocas received the silver medal at the 8th New York International Competition in New York. She is now on her second year as a company member of the Joeffrey Ballet in Chicago.

The BM (tel. 4043086, 4000292 or 5255967) workshop classes are divided into four levels (beginners to advanced). They also include pointe, variations, pas de deux, partnering, boys' classes and adult ballet. A "baby ballet" class is for children as young as three years old.

Enrollment is from March 17 to April 14. Classes will culminate in a two-day recital, May 26-27, at the Star Theater.

Auditions for scholars and apprentices will be held on March 17 at 2 p.m. Registration is at 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Fee is P200 per participant. Girls should be 12-18 years old, with a minimum ballet training of at least two years. Boys should also be 12-18 years old, but need not have any formal training.



BALLET Manila summer workshop scholars

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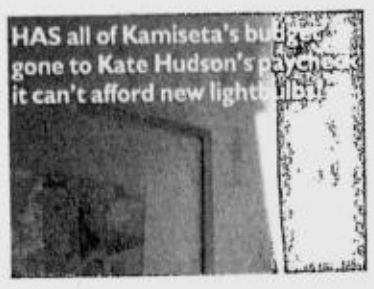
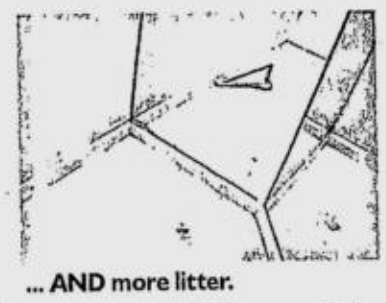


BAYO: Busted locks...

... ICKY floors...


... AND more litter.

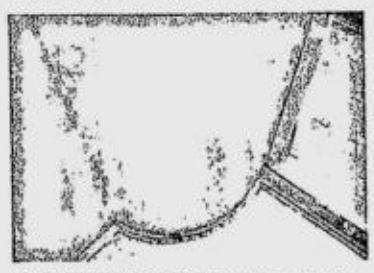
ESPRIT: Neat and spacious, with a vast waiting area

CINDERELLA: You call this a lock?

...SHABBY, definitely not chic...

industrial look

HER Bench's in-store *bodega*


FREEWAY: Making every square inch count

TOPSHOP: Stew in as many pieces as you want. Hot!

GLORIETTA

From scary corners to cozy-with-futon

Text and photos by Cheche V. Moral

PEOPLE R PEOPLE. Badly in need of a paint job

Bayo
Hands down the worst in cleanliness, and with a service that's just as bad. A fitting room in its old wing is littered with icky hairs and dust bunnies that are hard to ignore. At the newer wing, we tested the sales staff's helpfulness by queuing up at its two occupied dressing rooms, dramatically plumping our self on the cushy chair (plus point for that) to catch her attention. She completely ignored us and continued chatting with the lady guard. We asked if the rooms were occupied, she just said yes; turned her back and chitchatted again. She didn't offer to check the dressing rooms in the other wing (which were empty, by the way). When we finally got into a stall, we found crumpled paper and a hanger on the floor.

Bench
For a store its size, this Bench branch doesn't seem to have enough fitting rooms. The four stalls are tiny, too, with poor lighting. Were they constructed with midget shoppers in mind? There's always a queue of shopping men with armloads of jeans and skivvies.

Cinderella
Cinderella is one of those stores whose dressing rooms seem to have taken inspiration from solitary confinement—tiny with the barest necessities. On the second floor, two stalls are cast away in dressing-room Siberia, a scary corner with exposed beams and improvised locks, and littered with clothes and hangers left by previous shoppers while outside the sales staff chatted away.

Her Bench
It's a small store without, it seems, a provision for a storeroom. Boxes of merchandise are piled on the narrow corridor fronting the dressing rooms. Bench is a popular brand, so there's almost always a long queue at its three stalls, especially during sale season. Unnerving.

Ensembles
One of its four tiny stalls is used as storage, with clothes hanging from the curtain-rod "door."

Esprit at Cinderella
In contrast to the main Cinderella store, Esprit dressing rooms are thoughtfully provided with futons and upholstered benches at the waiting area.

Freeway
Freeway's market is the young and, uh, anorexic. That's perhaps why the store felt it was okay to fit a dressing-room stall in a teeny-tiny corner with a rounded concrete column that took almost half of the room. Anorexic and model-tall, too, as you have to tiptoe to reach the lock. Staff is friendly and helpful, though.

Jag
It has two tiny rooms with dizzying décor. Staff is helpful but seemed bored out of their wits that they entertain themselves by dancing to the loud blaring music.

Kamiseta
Energy-saving? Not! For a popular shop, it's just plain bad service. Two of Kamiseta's four stalls had busted lighting, but the staff asked if we wanted to get into one of them anyway (thanks!). As a result, there was a queue of irate shoppers. Inside one dark stall (which we went into just because), we could barely make out Kate Hudson's face smiling smugly at us from a framed photo on the wall. We ended up soaked in sweat as there seemed to be no air-conditioning either. When we stepped out, guess what we found? The salesclerk primping herself in front of the mirror.

Lee
Décor is funky, but you have to step out of the room to see how your bum looks in skinny jeans because the mirrors are installed outside the dressing rooms. And, because of poor lighting, you have to step really close to the mirror. The staff is polite if strict with the three-piece regulation. After exchanging sizes, the sales staff asked us to hand over the pieces we weren't buying (um, we didn't fit into).

Levi's
The guy who attended to us politely introduced himself, and went on to pick a selection for us to try on. For a medium-size store, Levi's has a good number of fitting rooms conceptualized to not look like run-of-the-mill cubicles. There are helpful jean-fit illustrations on each stall, plus a futon, too. The store also has cushy seats for your shopping-buddies-cum-stylists just outside the cubicles. Minus point, though, for the lighting, which is a bit dim, and the poor air-conditioning. Humid!

Mango
Mango's dressing-room stalls have gaps big enough to allow other shoppers to ogle our cellulites. But we love it that they have enough stalls to accommodate shoppers even at peak sale seasons, plus a waiting area for our shopping companions. And great, too, that you can horde as many pieces into your stall in one go. This branch is under renovation, so it currently has only six cramped stalls.

Marks & Spencer
Helpful staff. Clean stalls. But no futons in them. Perhaps because you don't need them trying on lingerie?

Penshoppe
One corner stall has two full-length mirrors, plus a bright red futon, too. Nice!

ZARA. Clean, well-organized, attentive staff—*ka-ching*!

People R People
Thoughtful enough to have a built-in concrete chair in each stall. A little paint job would help, however. The walls and floor look grimy.

Topshop
Stuff is great and staff is attentive without being pushy. If only you didn't end up feeling like you were in the sauna inside the fitting rooms. Topshop has to fix its air-conditioning! Who would want to try on (much less buy) clothes other people have stewed in?

Zara
Our top pick in the Glorietta area. Zara here is nothing like the Zara shops we've visited in Europe, where they're almost like a marketplace—perhaps because its positioning here is fancy, not as a mass-market brand. The stalls are clean and brightly lit; the staff is attentive but not overzealous. Try on as many clothes as you want in one trip, no problem.

Selected shops-Glorietta

	Bayo	Bench	Cinderella	Her Bench	Ensembles	Esprit	Freeway	Jag	Kamiseta	Lee	Levi's	Mango	Marks & Spencer	Penshoppe	People R People	Topshop	Zara
Size	**	**	**	**	**	***	**	**	**	**	***	**	***	***	**	***	****
Cleanliness—absence of clutter, etc.	*	**	*	**	**	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	****	***	**	***	****
Basic amenities—hooks, shelf, locks	**	**	*	**	**	****	**	**	**	**	****	**	**	***	***	**	****
Mirror & lighting	**	**	**	**	***	***	***	**	*	*	**	*	***	***	**	***	****
Quantity	***	***	**	**	**	****	***	**	*	**	*****	**	***	***	***	***	****
Service	*	***	*	***	***	**	***	***	*	***	*****	***	****	**	**	****	*****

SHANGRI-LA MALL

Wood floors and gaping holes

Text and photos by Pam Pastor

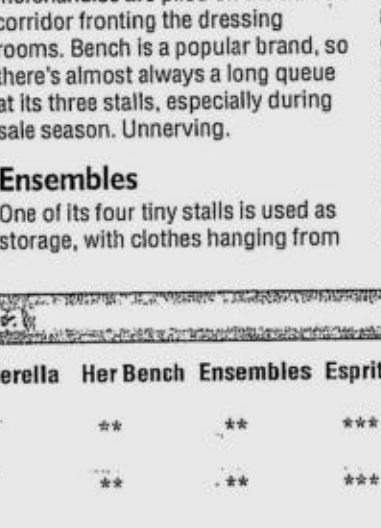
Bayo
There used to be two hooks in the fitting room but one had disappeared, leaving a sad hole and a mark on the wall. I wondered for a moment if it was torn off by a frustrated shopper who couldn't fit into a Bayo top. The angled mirror was present, as usual, but I was glad to see that the dirty plastic stool was not.

Bench
A big mirror, one hook and a ledge on one side of the fitting room. I'm not sure what the shelf is for. It's good to see they have six fitting rooms in one store—small chance of having to line up, unless there is a huge sale.

Debenhams
Debenhams' fitting rooms have two mirrors inside, offering a two-angle view while you try on the clothes. Three hooks, one long bar, beige curtains and, most importantly, flattering lighting. The wood floors are a nice touch, too. I was greeted enthusiastically as I walked in, but no one offered any help though.

Folded & Hung
Folded & Hung's fitting rooms have heavy mirror doors that I found hard to open. Because they are heavy, the doors are almost always closed. There are stocks all over the floor by the fitting area though, a definite eyesore.

Kamiseta
Kamiseta in Shangri-La Mall offers an impressive number of clean, white fitting rooms with denim curtains, four hooks and a framed picture. The framed picture gets them bonus points—a breath of fresh air after seeing fitting rooms that don't even have properly installed hooks. We also like the sofas in the store, and we're sure the impatient husbands and boyfriends appreciate them, too. Now if the store can only do something about the service, things would be even better.

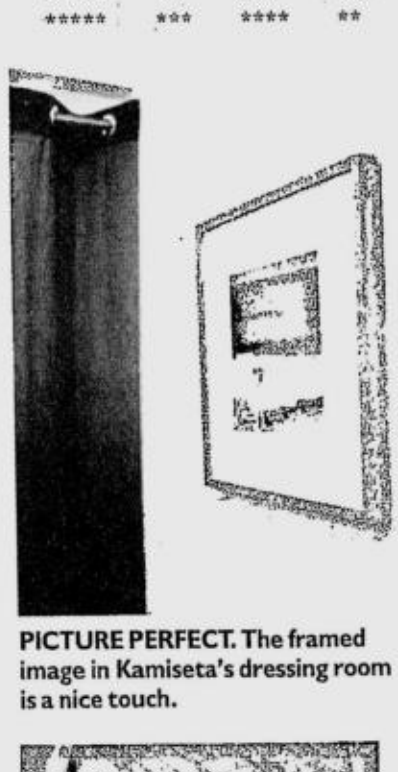

EYESORE. Topshop's steamer was in plain view in the fitting room area.

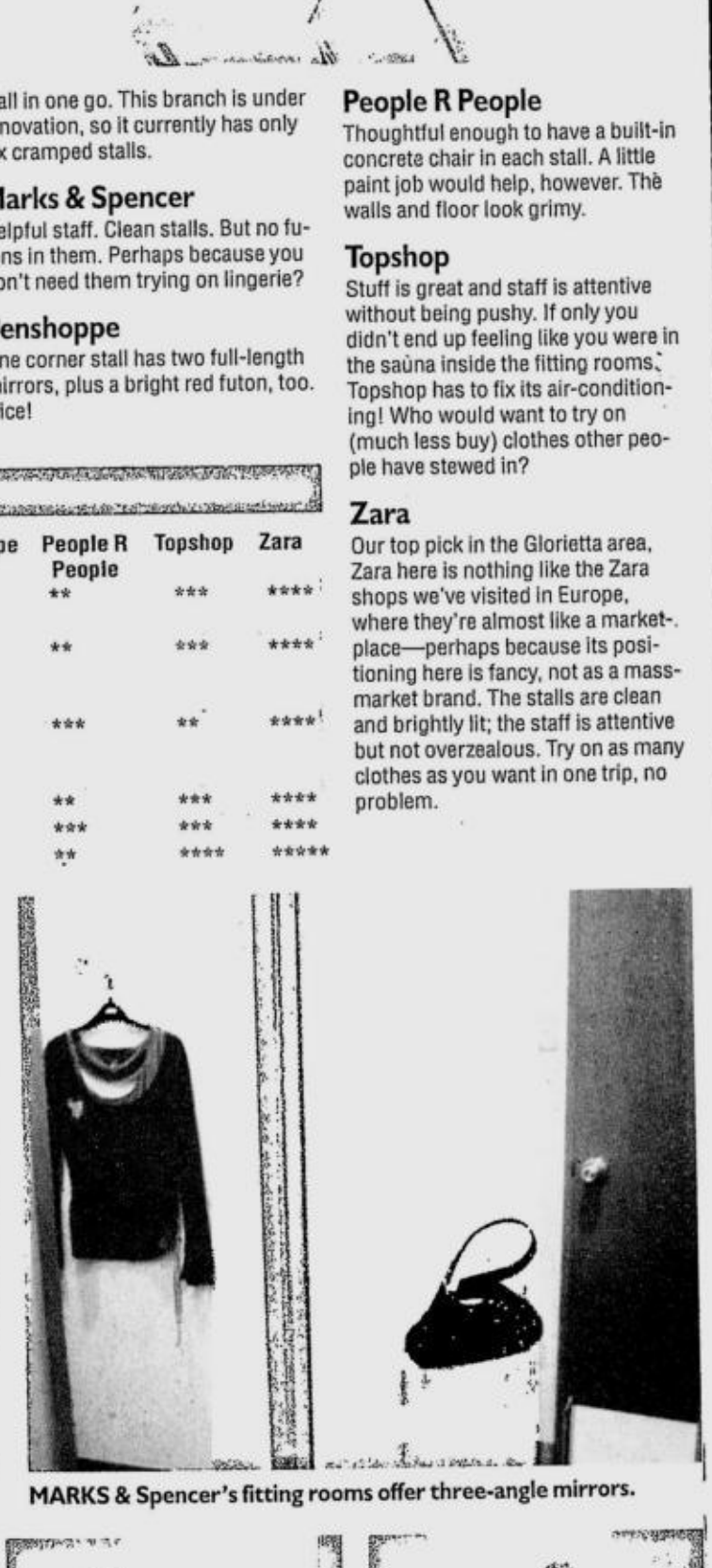
Levi's
Kudos to Levi's for the cool fitting room concepts. The fitting rooms in Shangri-La were designed like oversized red lockers. Pretty cool.

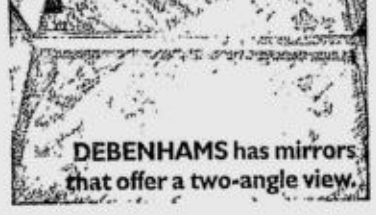
Mango
Service was great. I picked one shirt out and was immediately offered to be led to the fitting room. When I asked for a little more time so I could choose other pieces, the girl waited patiently until I was done. The fitting rooms are different—actually, I refuse to call them rooms. They're cloth cubicles with swinging cloth doors. The lighting was great, a little dark in an I'd-have-a-first-date-here kind of way. The funny thing about having cloth walls covering a cramped space is you can actually see movement in the next cubicle. The girl in the fitting room next to mine was overly enthusiastic about trying on her top that, at one point, I think I saw her elbow poke through the cloth wall. At least I hope it was an elbow.

Marks & Spencer
Marks & Spencer's fitting rooms at the Shangri-La Mall are inviting. The lighting is good, the doors have secure locks and there are three mirrors instead of one, so you can see what you're trying on from different angles. There's also a fitting room assistant, so you're sure there's always someone there to give shoppers a hand.

Topshop
I don't know if it was just me, but Topshop's fitting room was hot—not in a good, sexy way but in a bad, sweaty way. I think the air vent was off. The light was off, too, and since I was pretty much ignored by the salesgirls, I didn't bother to ask for help. The steamer, which was in the fitting room area, was a bit of an eyesore.


PICTURE PERFECT. The framed image in Kamiseta's dressing room is a nice touch.


MARKS & Spencer's fitting rooms offer three-angle mirrors.

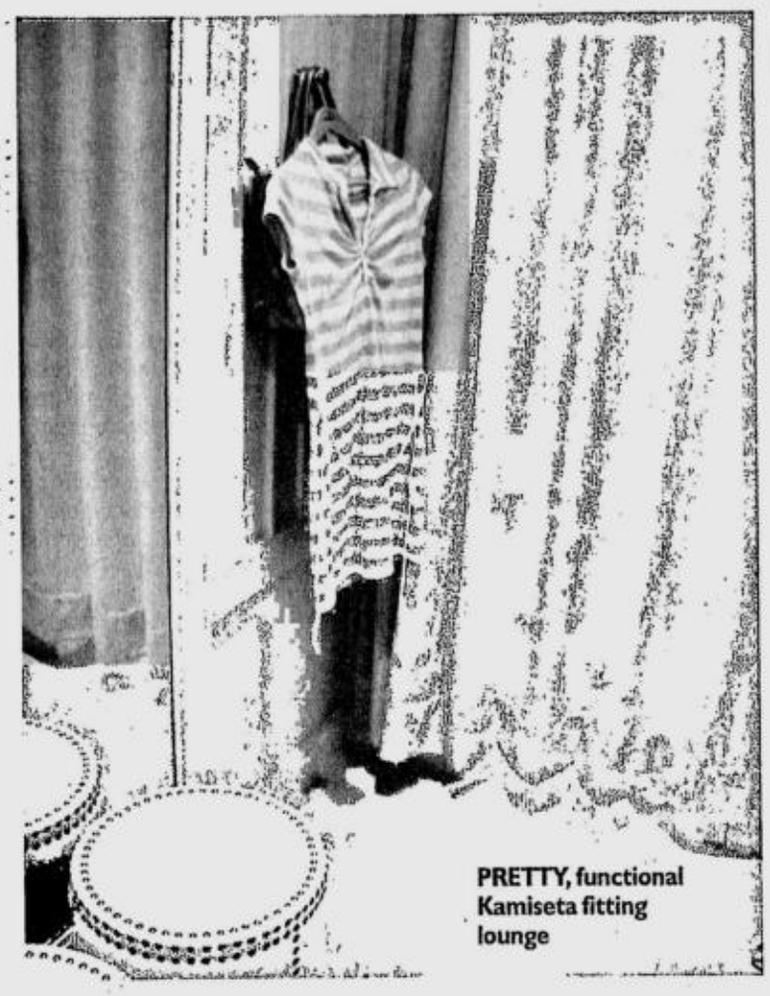

DEBENHAMS has mirrors that offer a two-angle view.

TOPSHOP'S fitting room was hot.

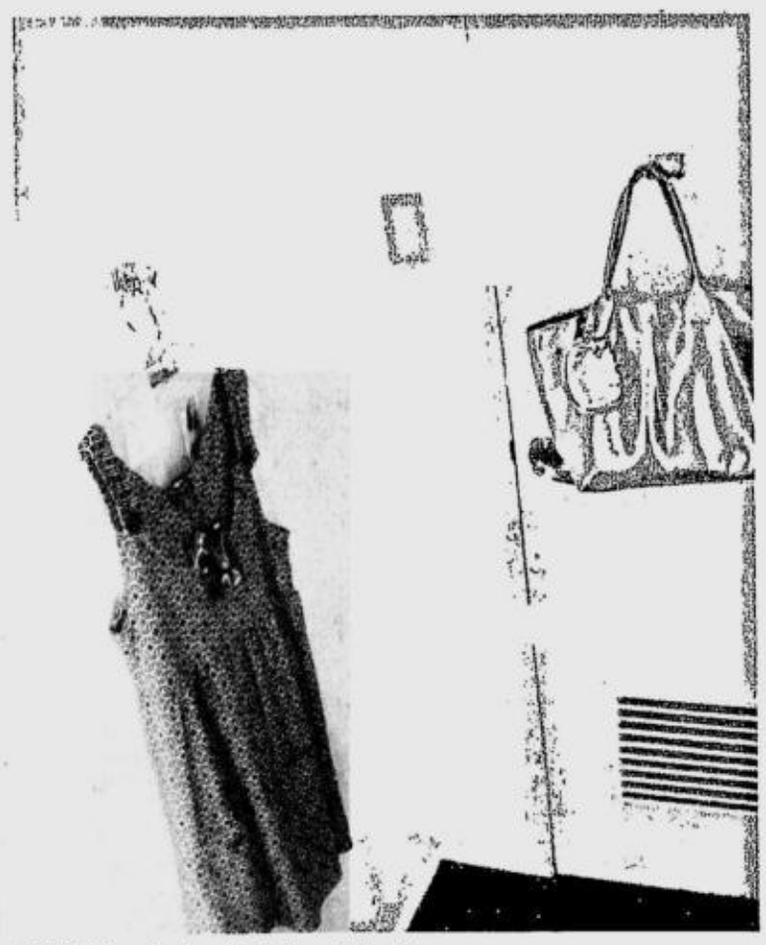
THERE used to be a hook here.

Selected shops-Shangri-La Mall

	Bayo	Bench	Debenhams	Folded & Hung	Kamiseta	Levi's	Mango	Marks & Spencer	Topshop
Size	**	***	****	***	***	***	**	****	***
Cleanliness—absence of clutter, etc.	**	***	****	****	****	****	***	****	***
Basic amenities—hooks, shelf, locks	**	***	****	***	****	****	***	****	***
Mirror and lighting	**	***	****	***	****	****	****	*****	***
Quantity	**	*****	****	***	*****	****	*****	***	***
Service	*	*	*	**	*	***	*****	****	**


PRETTY, functional Kamiseta fitting lounge

BAYO'S box needs some cleaning.


PETIT Monde does it plain and simple.

SM MALL OF ASIA

Eyesores and eye-candy

Text and photos by Fran Katigbak

Bayo

Bayo wins the award for having the most number of hooks. Alas, these amenities serve no purpose if people can't identify the dressing room from the storage closet. Bayo's fitting boxes (yes, from the inside they look like boxes) sit next to the storeroom with a disturbing clutter of unpacked merchandise. Oh, yeah, the boxes need cleaning, too.

Bench/Her Bench

With its grand ad campaigns and projects, Bench could just as easily toss a bit more moolah into jazzing up its fitting rooms. What a disappointment to find three rooms in threadbare state—single hook, one huge wood-framed mirror tilted at an eerie coffin-like angle, white walls, unflattering fluorescent light. The door, which has a mirror plastered on the outer side, is cut a little above mid-calf. That's how much leg (possibly awkward jeans-fitting positions, too) is exposed and reflected on the door mirror of the opposite fitting room for all to see. Dust and dirt are the only things that seem abundant inside.

Hang Ten

What are all those mirrors for? Unless Hang Ten hasn't figured it out, no customer in her/his right mind would dare fit jeans outside the cubicles. Fitting rooms are average, period.

Kamiseta

Pretty and functional best describe the Kamiseta fitting room. Cream walls decked with nifty hooks and bars, thick pink curtains, white upholstered low seat, wide wall mirrors and soft lighting make for a very Barbie doll-like fitting experience. There's even enough room for a girl to twirl in that adorable dress or skirt!

Kashieca

Small, but not terrible. Considering the size of the shop, Kashieca could get away with its cramped fitting rooms. But at least, they look chic and are equipped with floor-length curtain, clean mirror, shelf and hooks.

Mango

Mango has an army of fitting rooms. It's like a disciplined bunch of soldiers—austere, orderly, efficient. But the rooms are no place for claustrophobes as they are small, with dark leather-like upholstery seeming to block you in.

Penshoppe

We emerged from Penshoppe wowed by its funky fitting rooms. The genius behind it deserves a raise for craftily combining wood, metal, fabric, glass and cement to dress up what would have been just a plain box. The fitting room had a different aura from the rest of the store, like you were in some foreign, upscale, high-end, trendy boutique.

People R People

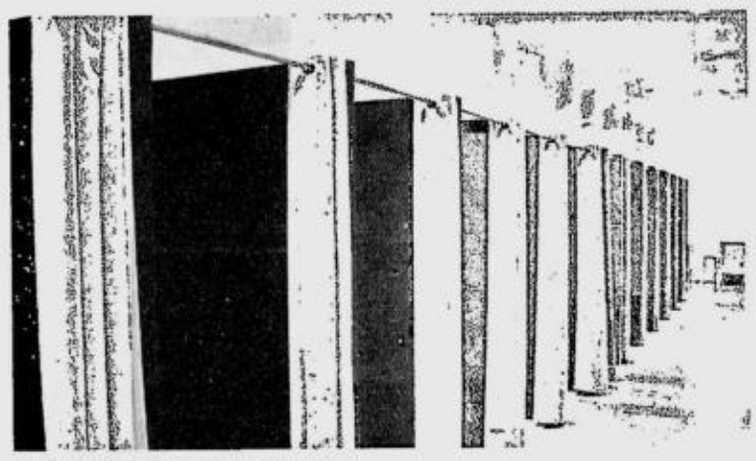
The store sets the standard for modest fitting rooms. The simple layout actually works: full-length mirror mounted on the wall, built-in seat, sturdy bag hooks and soft lighting. Located at a walled-in area, customers need not even worry about exposing anything underneath doors which are cut inches above ground. Service can improve, though, with a bit of enthusiasm and smiles from the staff.

Petit Monde

Plain, simple fitting rooms complement the tidy layout of the shop. But the salesclerks were annoying and pushy. They shoved at me clothes to try on even when I was vehemently shaking my head in protest. If nothing fits, one would feel guilty leaving the store without a purchase.

Topshop

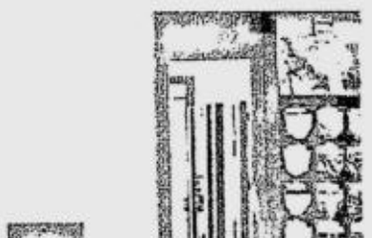
Topshop gets passing marks but, if it wants to get an A, we suggest installing floor-length curtains and a cushioned chair. You know, just to keep up with the brand image.


MANGO'S army on the ready

MIRROR-CRAZY Hang Ten cubicle

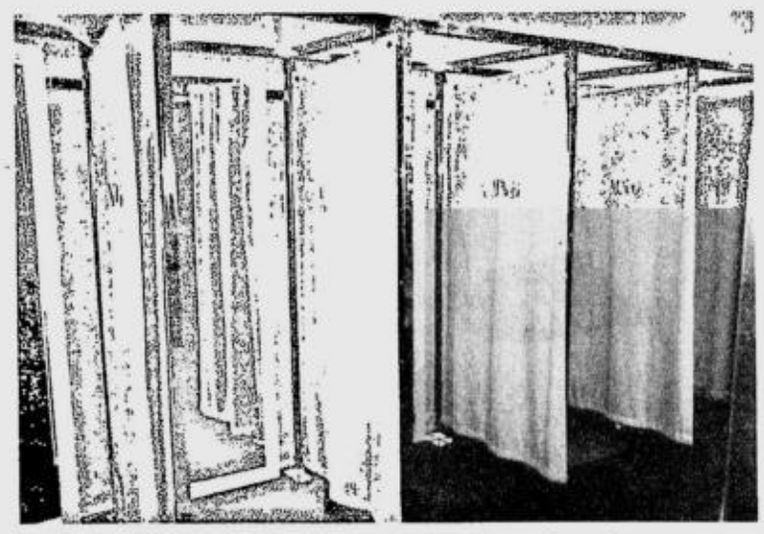
PASSING marks for Topshop's top box

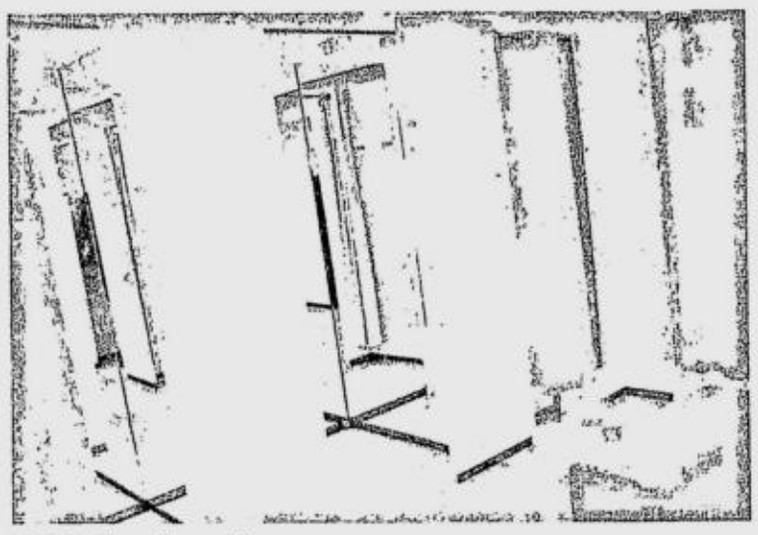
FUNKY combination of decor at Penshoppe


BENCH room in threadbare state.

Selected shops—SM Mall of Asia

	Bayo	Bench/ Her Bench	Kamiseta	People R People	Penshoppe	Mango	Topshop	Petit Monde
Size	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	**	****	*****
Cleanliness—absence of clutter, etc.	**	**	****	****	*****	****	****	****
Basic amenities—hooks, shelf, locks	**	*	*****	*****	*****	***	****	***
Mirror and lighting	**	*	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****
Quantity	*****	****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****
Service	****	*****	****	***	*****	***	****	**
Regulations	****	*****	****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****


MANGO. Perhaps they can do better than those drapes?


ZARA. Clean lines, tidy rooms

BAYO. Get a room—a storage room, that is.

Power Plant, Rockwell

Steamy vs spacious, neat

Text and photos by Anne A. Jambora

Bayo

Bayo's fitting rooms bring to mind the movie "Trainspotting," when Ewan McGregor's character slips inside the "Dirtiest Toilet In The World." A cluster of hair and dust is found in one corner, one of the hooks is missing and hangers are sprawled on the floor. Even worse, a thumb tuck is dangerously waiting for its victim by the door. Ah, but we never should have expected too much. The way to the fitting room was enough to make you squirm—clothes piled up on one side against a mountain of hangers. And did we say there was a woman busy with ironing? Did she do that the whole day?

Bench

Room size is reasonable, ceiling is high. No clutter in sight, not a misplaced hanger or whatnot. Ah, if only all the lights were working...

Kamiseta

Oh, these eye-candy fittings rooms are certainly among the best in town. They look good and smell great! No problem on busy days, either. There's enough room for everybody. If you must stand in line, it won't be a long wait.

Levi's

Adjust the light to your liking at just the press of some buttons. There are two large mirrors, one in front and the other on the side, so you won't have to keep turning around to check your, um, rear. Very friendly and helpful staff as well.

Mango

The only downside are those curtain swing doors. Admit it, they do make you a little uncomfortable, especially when shopping on your own. I mean, it's a place where you take off your clothes. Anyone could accidentally poke his/her head in. Otherwise, Mango's fitting rooms are okay. And what mirrors they have! So flattering you look slimmer than you actually are.

Marks & Spencer

Neat, spacious, friendly sales personnel, just as expected.

People R People

Like anyone with a good pair of eyes, we know when clothes look good on us. Well, at least by our own standards. So, puh-leez, restrain your staff from making unsolicited compliments just so they can close a deal. Being helpful is great, but getting pushy is irritating.

Topshop/Dorothy Perkins

Is it hot in here, or is it just me? The rooms look okay, but beware, it's steaming hot inside them! On a busy day you might find yourself working up a sweat while going through your possible purchases.

Zara

The main fitting room area is certainly one of the best we've seen. Mirrors are regularly wiped clean of fingerprints, and there's a small couch just outside the rooms for friends to relax on while waiting for you to make up your mind.

KAMISETA. Room for everybody

BENCH. Too basic for comfort

LEVI'S. Cool lighting gadget

Selected shops—Power Plant, Rockwell

	Bayo	Bench	Kamiseta	Levis 's	Mango	Marks &Spencer	People R People	Topshop /Dorothy Perkins	Zara
Size	***	***	*****	*****	*****	****	****	****	*****
Cleanliness—absence of clutter, etc.	*	***	****	****	****	****	****	****	****
Basic amenities—hooks, shelf, locks	**	**	****	****	****	****	****	***	*****
Mirror and lighting	***	**	****	*****	****	****	***	****	****
Quantity	*	**	****	****	*****	***	****	***	****
Service	*	***	****	****	****	***	***	***	****
Regulations	***	***	****	****	****	****	***	***	****

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Milestones

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BALBUENA-TORREFIEL

Pet Dominic Barriga Balbuena and Dr. **Will-an Bono Torrefiel** were married recently at Sacred Heart Parish in Cebu City. Rev. Fr. **Sherwin Ferrater** officiated at the ceremony. Reception was held at the Sinulog Grand Ballroom of City Sports Club, Ayala Business Center, Cebu.

DELA CRUZ-CASTRO

Paulito S. dela Cruz, son of **Carlito** and **Florita dela Cruz**, and Dr. **Cecile A. Castro**, daughter of **Dominador** and **Ruth Castro**, wed recently at Basilica of San Sebastian. Reception was held at Baluarte de San Diego.

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CONDE-CACHO

Zaldy Conde, son of **Sandiego** (deceased) and **Juanita Conde**, and **Sherry Ann Cacho**, daughter of **Alejo** (deceased) and **Estrelita Cacho**, will be married March 18 at Camelot Hotel.

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FLORESTA-BERNARDEZ

Mark Floresta, son of lawyer **Domingo** and **Haydee Floresta**, and **Yven Bernardez**, daughter of **Jaime** and **Ellen Bernardez**, exchanged vows recently at the Church of the Risen Lord, University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City. Reception was held at the Ateneo High School Quadrangle, Ateneo High School, Quezon City.

YAP-REYES

Jason J. Yap, son of engineer **Jaime** and **Alma Yap**, and **Jan Nicole B. Reyes**, daughter of **Tomas** and **Fe (*née* Bejar) Reyes**, wed recently at the Sacred Heart Parish Church, D. Jakosalem St., Cebu City. Reception was held at the Salon de España, Casino Español de Cebu.

SEGRE-IRENEO

Felix Jigs Gonzales Segre, son of **Alicia Bandola Gonzales vda. de Segre** of Surigao del Sur, tied the knot recently with **Jasmin Estrada Ireneo**, daughter of **Rosita Ireneo vda. de Chua** of San Leandro, California, at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Philippines Manila Temple in White Plains, Quezon City. Reception followed at Pan Pacific Hotel Manila in Malate, Manila.

AGUILAR SILVER WEDDING

Martin and **Malou Aguilar** celebrated their silver anniversary recently at the Manila Cathedral in Intramuros. Reception was held at Plaza Moriones Trellis, Intramuros, Manila.

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MANSUETO-DELOS REYES NUPTIAL

A smooth sailing at last

THE NEWLYWEDS, Bhen and Lanie Mansueto (*née* Delos Reyes)

By Tina G. Santos

LEILANI DELOS REYES SAID IT WAS not love at first sight when she met her husband Vicente "Bhen" Mansueto seven years ago.

In fact, she thought he was cheeky for asking for her number as soon as they were introduced by a mutual friend during a party. He fetched her at work the next day and stole a kiss from her even before they became officially a couple.

Though it could have merited a slap on the face, the stolen kiss signaled the beginning of a beautiful relationship that culminated in solemn and simple nuptial rites at the San Ildefonso Parish in Makati City.

But that's getting ahead of the story.

Mansueto was the first to admit that, just like any other relationship, theirs was not always smooth-sailing.

The youngest in a brood of six, the Cebuano groom had to pass through the proverbial needle's eye before he finally got the approval of his strict would-be father-in-law.

Comic scene

"Her dad would always lay down the mattress and pillows in front of me whenever I visited her at home. It meant it's late and I had to go home," Mansueto laughed, describing it as a scene straight out of a television sitcom.

His elder sister also did not approve of the relationship because, at that time, he was still training to be a seaman.

But the real test for the couple came in 2004 when he had to work overseas as a member of a cargo ship crew.

Delos Reyes expected the job and feared deep inside that a long-distance relationship might not endure. She thought the times they had together might not make up for the years of absence.

Before Mansueto left one February morn-

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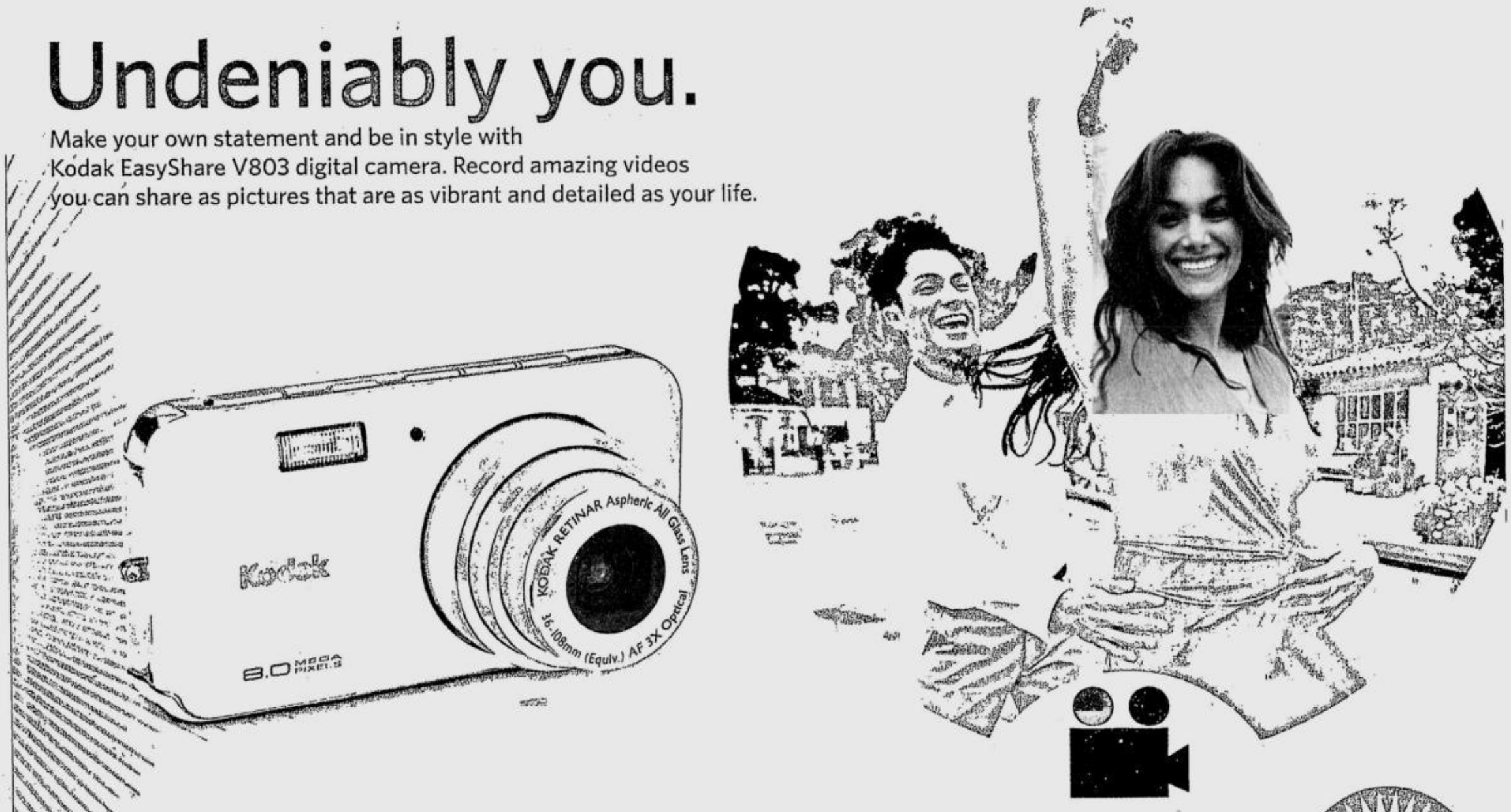

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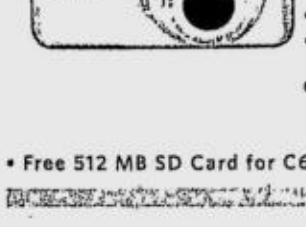

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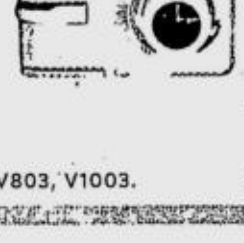

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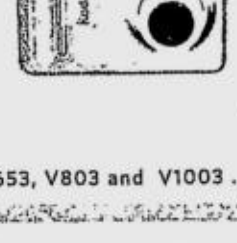

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Groom's job onboard a ship almost put an end to this romance

ing, he and Delos Reyes swore to be true to each other. They promised frequent phone calls, regular e-mail and occasional old-fashioned letters sealed with a kiss.

None of these promises, however, were fulfilled—at least on Mansueto's part.

"I did not receive a call or a letter from him," she said. "I was clueless. I didn't know what went wrong [in our relationship]."

Heartbroken, Delos Reyes left her job as a supervisor of a Manila department store and accepted a job overseas as a luxury liner staff member.

Renewed promises

But Mansueto soon realized that it was still Delos Reyes for him. So he renewed his promises of fidelity and constant connection.

"Sometimes you really won't realize how much a person means to you until she's away from you," he said. "It's funny, but absence really made our hearts grow fonder."

When the couple came home in November 2005, Mansueto more than made up for lost time by proposing marriage.

But, being a dutiful daughter, Delos Reyes was not prepared to think about marriage yet, saying she still had a lot of plans for her family.

Mansueto, however, was not to be put off. Three months later, on Feb. 8, 2006, the two were married in civil rites at the Pasay City Hall.

The couple's church wedding last Jan. 27 was doubly memorable. It was not only the culmination of their love story but it also marked the 33rd wedding anniversary of Delos Reyes' parents, Antonio and Lilia, who were both teary eyed as they walked with their eldest daughter down the aisle.

The bride was a picture of love and bloom in a princess-cut duchess-satin gown when she met her groom—accompanied by his mother Jovita and sister Dolly, who took the place of his departed father Herminio—at the altar.

Principal witnesses to the union were Roel Villacastin, Rogelio Monge, Rodolfo Garcia, Arnold Cabanog, Andres Manalo, Clarita Osete, Myrna Pangulayan, Belen Lapuz, Nelsa Briones and Milagros Santos, the bride's baptismal godmother.

The bride's best friends since college, Rowena Cuison and Maryrosewill Blagburn, were maid of honor and bride's maid, respectively.

Mansueto's best men were Daryl Rex Demirin and Herbert Lapidario.

Candle, veil and cord sponsors were the groom's nephews John Roland Forrosuelo and Mark Dave Lapinig, and niece Kathlyn Atim; the bride's sisters Liberty and Maricel de los Reyes and brother-in-law Rex Anthony Magpayo.

Little attendants were Regie Mark Magpayo, Ervie Brylle Balase, Reiner Marvin Magpayo, Janelle Marie Marasigan, Nikki Heart Buno and Dolly Mae Martos.

The occasion was a touching celebration of love, family and friendship. This was evident in the sparkle on the couple's faces as they greeted their guests at the reception.

Separate gatherings were also held for the couple's relatives in Cebu and Batangas.

Wedding gift registry now in Cebu

RUSTAN'S WEDDINGS & BEYOND, the gift registry program, will open at Rustan's Cebu (Shangri-La Mactan) on March 24.

Weddings & Beyond covers wedding gowns, jewelry, the latest cosmetics, toiletries, household furnishings and innovative gift ideas.

For the Cebu launch, the Marquee of Shangri-La's Mactan Resort and Spa will be turned into a bridal paradise.

Cebu's leading fashion designers will display their various takes on the bridal gown.

The country's leading wedding vendors, suppliers and planners will also exhibit.

Clients may create their own personalized wish list from among several world-renowned labels exclusively available at Rustan's.

They may also inform friends and family of their gift registries with the Weddings & Beyond's registry notification cards.

The registry empowers guests to give the right gift and only the finest items.

In addition, the service also provides clients assistance and information, such as wedding or party coordinators, product reviews, gift recommendations, and the latest information on the season's must-haves here and abroad.

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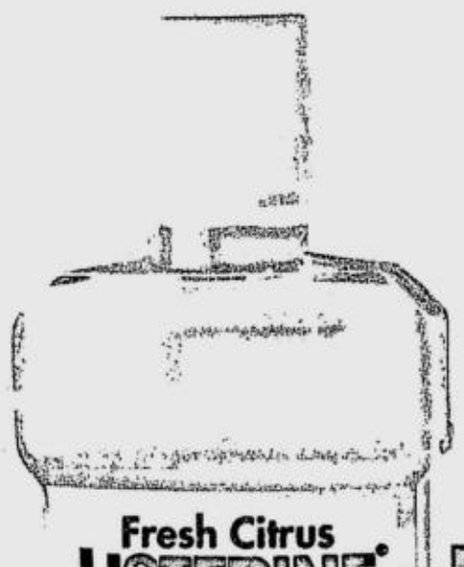
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RISA Bondoc at 4 years old with her physiatrist Donna Nimic in Boston and Risa's mother, Menchu Bondoc

BILL Stelton (right) with Steven Goh and Keren Pascual

PURELY PERSONAL
Josephine Darang

Filipino girl's cure supports cause for sainthood

THE MIRACULOUS healing of Risa Bondoc of a serious ailment elevated the cause to sainthood of Blessed Marie Eugenie, founder of the Religious of the Assumption.

Blessed Marie will be canonized on June 3 at St. Peter's Square in Rome.

Risa Bondoc, now 12 and a Grade IV student of Assumption College, will attend accompanied by her parents, Ditos and Menchu Bondoc, and her sisters, Ma. Regina Iguitan and Ma. Victoria Tabora.

When Risa, baptized Ma. Carmela Therese Eugenie, was 2 months old, she was brought to Dr. Manuel Hechanova, an eye doctor, because her mother noticed that she could not seem to focus. Risa was diagnosed with "nys stagmus," a condition that affected muscles of the eyes. Dr. Manuel Delfin confirmed the finding.

At 6 months old, Risa was brought to Dr. Froilan Innocencio, a pediatric ophthalmologist. Tests showed weakness of the muscles of the eyes. This meant Risa would never be able to read fine print without very thick lenses. But Innocencio also said the problem might be coming from the brain.

Risa was brought to Dr. Myrna Fojas, a pediatric neurologist, who suggested magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the brain. Dr. Benjamin Adapon of the Makati Medical Center read the results. His wife, Dr. Ofelia Adapon, told Menchu to pray for a miracle.

Tests found abnormalities in the brain's structure. When Menchu heard the news, she and her family started to pray the novena for the canonization of Mother Marie Eugenie. She made Risa wear the medal and relic of MME.

After two days, Menchu went to Fojas who told her to pray because only a miracle could make Risa normal. The doctor warned of seizures and convulsions. But none of these things happened.

The baby was brought later to Houston Children's Hospital in Boston upon the suggestion of Dr. Evangeline Poblete, pediatrician of Menchu's eldest daughter.

Risa was a year and 3 months old when she was first brought to Houston. Three doctors examined her but it was Dr. Carlos Rivera, a neurologist, who first diagnosed her ailment as "septo optic dysphasia."

From Houston, Menchu brought her daughter to the Mother House of the Religious of the Assumption in Paris. In the presence of the Mother General, Mother Cristina Marie, and nuns, Menchu laid Risa on top of the tomb of Blessed Marie Eugenie and commended the girl's cure to her.

Menchu said a vigil light was always lit at the tomb for Risa's cure. Mother Cristina also placed Risa's photo at the altar of their founder. In the provincial house in Manila, Sister Vicenta put Risa's picture below Blessed Marie Eugenie's.

Today, Risa is a normal, active and cheerful 12-year-old, to her doctors' amazement. They call it a miracle. Those who wish to go to Rome for the canonization can text Menchu at 0918-9100956.

Novena

The Hospicio de San José is holding a nine-day Novena of Masses to St. Joseph March 10-19. Masses are celebrated at 6 p.m. by different priests. The Friends of St. Joseph headed by Danny Reyes helped put up an exhibit. Those who want their St. Joseph images exhibited can text Danny at 0920-9133836. March 19 is the feast day of St. Joseph.

Lay Dominican Congress

The International Council of Lay Dominican Fraternities (ICLDF) spearheads a historic assembly, the International Congress of Lay Dominican Fraternities, March 17-24 at Pilar in the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Congress venue is El Cenaculo, a former seminary converted into a multipurpose conference/retreat building. Its sprawling grounds provide a peaceful ambience for social activities or meditation.

Some 80 national council lay Dominican presidents and heads of vicariates and sub-vicariates will discuss the theme "Lay Dominicans: Companions in Preaching." The master of the Order of Preachers, Rev. Fr. Carlos A. Azpiroz Costa, OP, is keynote speaker. Dean Belen Tangco, OP, heads the Philippine delegation.

Scholars

Ten high-school students will get scholarships beginning school year 2007-2008 to attend night classes at Siena College in Taytay, Rizal. Students will be supported until they finish high school in 2012.

Bill Stelton, president and chair of Bistro Group of Restaurants, and Lewis Edwards of Better Chance Foundation raised funds through a charity night at Fish & Co. in SM Mall of Asia.

With the opening of Fish & Co. in Greenbelt and Shangri-La Plaza and Italianni's in SM Megamall, Stelton and the Rotary Club of Guadalupe, of which he was former president, were able to raise P1.2 million for the Gawad Kalinga project to build 20 houses for the poor in Mandaluyong.

Fiesta

San Josef Sur, a barangay in Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija, has been preparing for months for the fiesta of St. Joseph that will be marked on March 21.

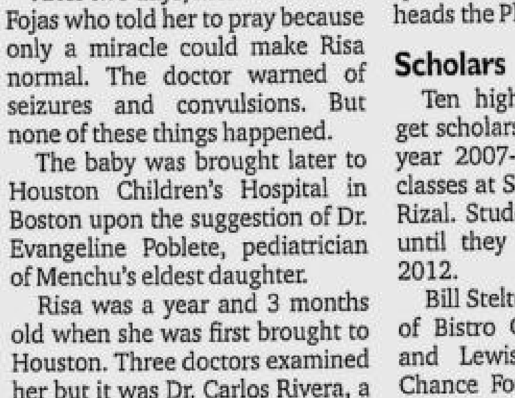
Every Saturday, Marcelino "Mars" Ramos, president of the Nueva Ecija Center for Culture and the Arts Foundation Inc., teaches in the chapel 20 children to draw, create stuffed toys and act. Mars is an artist with 33 years experience in theater.

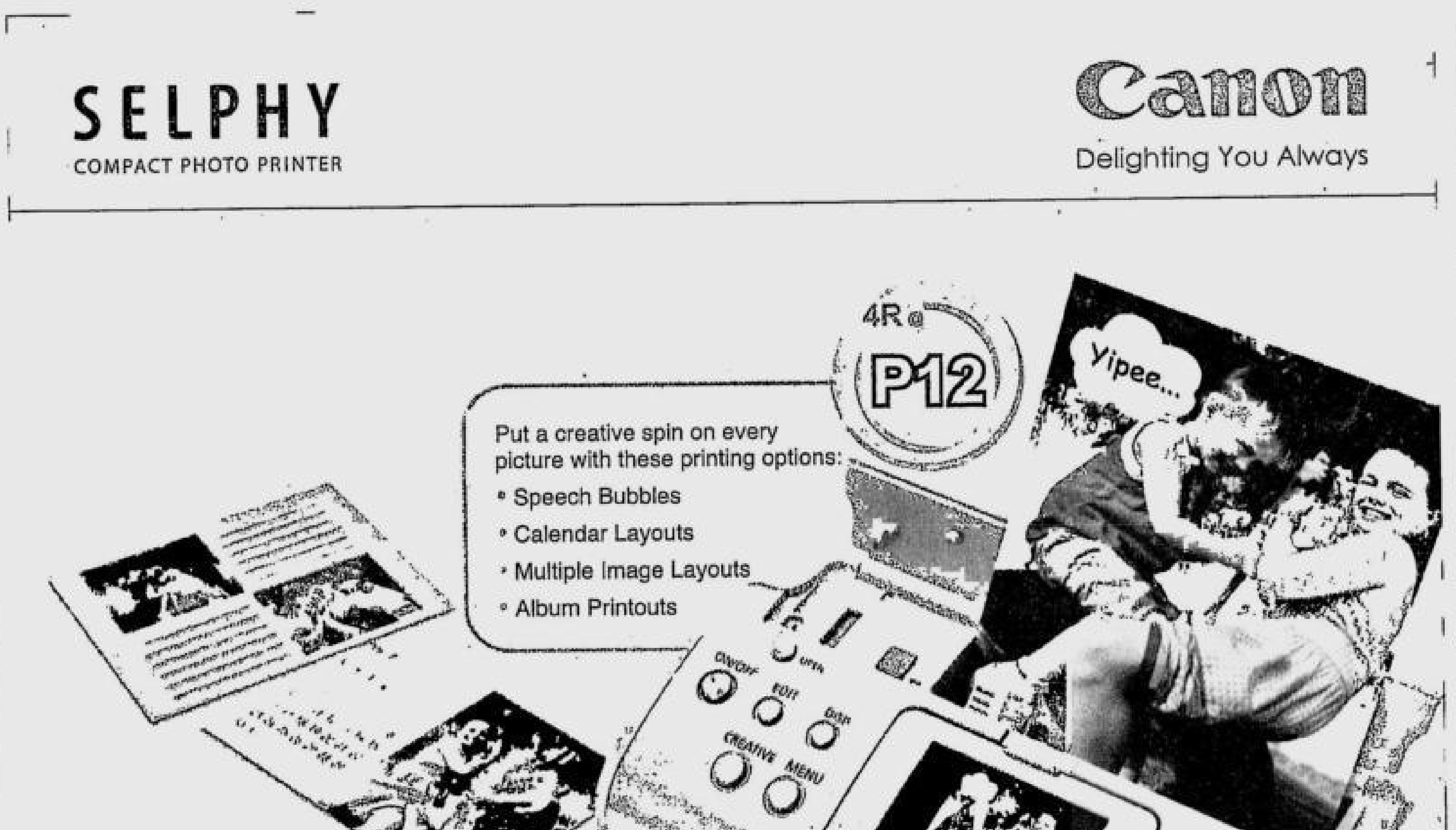
An exhibit that opens March 21 will feature 15 stuffed toys of biblical characters and drawings. The children will also present a play.

Mars is continuing a tradition began by his ancestors in 1893. Pascual Balarag's daughter Felicidad was Mars' grandmother. She was the mother of Alicia Balarag, his mother.

This year's *hermana mayor* is Agapita Pamulaklakin, a florist in Manila. Barangay pastoral council president is Cely Bagsic. Holy Mass will be celebrated at the chapel.

ANSWER TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD





Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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'Batad' featured in San Jose film fest; Gawad Kalinga film premieres in LA

YOUNG actors Alchris Galura, left, and AA Fernandez in "Batad"

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Ruben V. Nepales

LOS ANGELES—ONE UNEXpected benefit of writing this column is hearing from old friends, schoolmates, town mates and readers.

I got an e-mail from **Flor Salanga**, who was part of our gang of buddies in the late '70s through the early '80s that explored Puerto Galera and lesser-known beaches all over Luzon. As the associate producer of "Batad: Sa Paang Palay," Flor shared the good news that the film is included in the Cinequest Film Festival in San Jose, California which ends today, Sunday. From among 150-plus movies in the fest, the award-winning San Jose Mercury News highlighted "Batad" and four other films in an article.

The paper's **Bruce Newman** wrote: "Ag-Ap (**Al Chris Galura**) works in the rice terraces farmed by his father in the Philippine countryside, but he yearns to move to the big city, as so many other young people in 'Batad' are doing. Even his little sister wonders impatiently why they have to stay in such a far place. Ag-Ap is convinced that the first step toward Manila, or some other, even more impossible distant metropolis in Japan, is owning a new pair of shoes, and to earn the money it will take to buy them, he becomes a tour guide to foreign trekkers.

"The real beauty of **Benji Garcia**'s directorial debut is how far away from our own world it transports us, and how deeply it burrows into the rural life it slowly reveals. Galura was named Best Actor at the 2006 Philippine Independent Film Festival for his performance as the frustrated boy, and writer **Victor Acedillo Jr.** won for Best Screenplay. The movie's pacing sometimes reminds you why Ag-Ap wants out of his village, but the deeper it delves into his life, the more 'Batad' picks up speed."

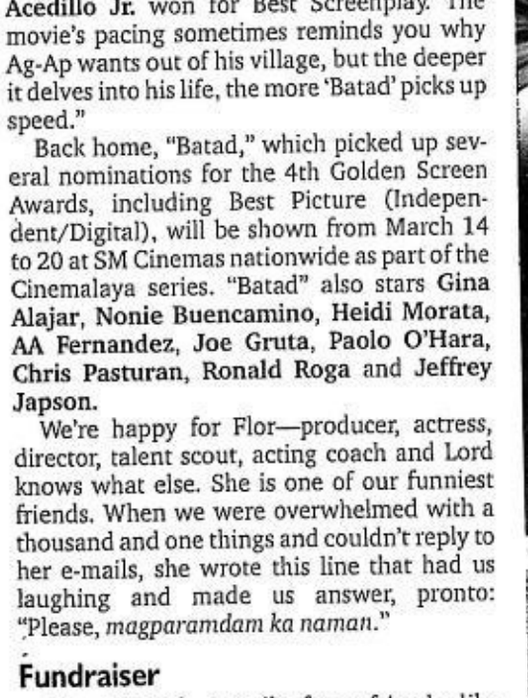
Back home, "Batad," which picked up several nominations for the 4th Golden Screen Awards, including Best Picture (Independent/Digital), will be shown from March 14 to 20 at SM Cinemas nationwide as part of the Cinemalaya series. "Batad" also stars **Gina Alajar, Nonie Buencamino, Heidi Morata, AA Fernandez, Joe Gruta, Paolo O'Hara, Chris Pasturan, Ronald Roga** and **Jeffrey Japson.**

We're happy for Flor—producer, actress, director, talent scout, acting coach and Lord knows what else. She is one of our funniest friends. When we were overwhelmed with a thousand and one things and couldn't reply to her e-mails, she wrote this line that had us laughing and made us answer, pronto: "Please, *magparamdam ka naman*."

Fundraiser

Also through e-mails from friends like **Cindy Sison** and **Rey Reyes**, we learned that the Gawad Kalinga (GK) movie, "Paraiso,"

'BATAD'/ G4



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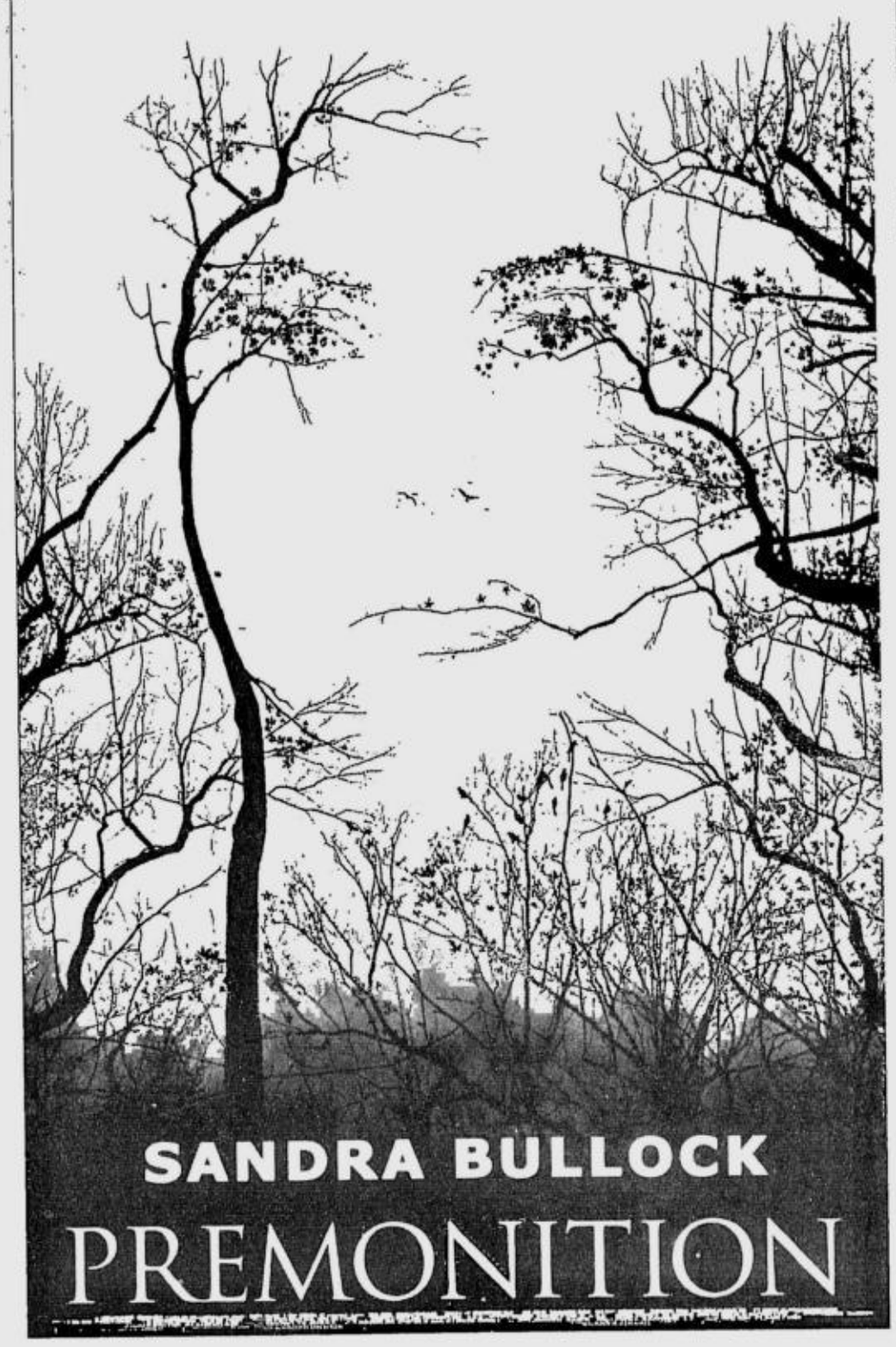
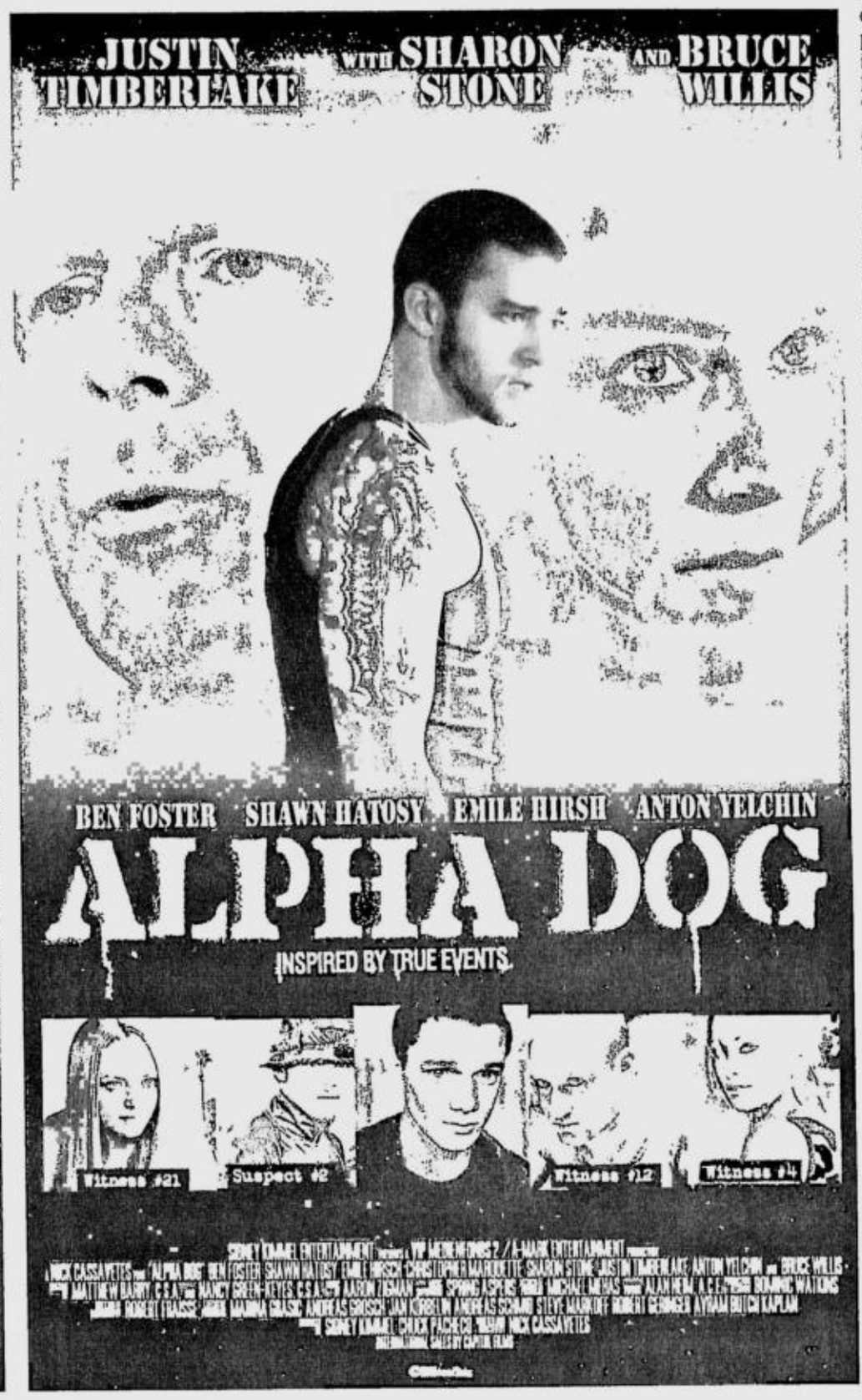


RUSHES

JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE WITH SHARON STONE AND BRUCE WILLIS



Johnny Depp's daughter doing fine

LONDON—JOHNNY Depp's 7-year-old daughter, who has reportedly been receiving treatment in a British hospital, is "much better," the star's publicist said Thursday.

Britain's Daily Mirror newspaper reported Thursday that Lily-Rose, daughter of Depp and French singer Vanessa Paradis, was admitted to a hospital nine days ago and was in a serious condition. *AP*

To rehab

LOS ANGELES—Rock guitarist Eddie Van Halen said on Thursday he would enter rehab "to work on myself," a move that appears to rule out a reunion by his troubled band when it is inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame next week. *Reuters*

Bardem & Allen

MADRID—Spain's hottest film star Javier Bardem is to join his compatriot Penelope Cruz in Woody's Allen's new movie, he told Spain's El Pais newspaper on Thursday.

Asked about the role, Bardem said "It's something of a secret." *Reuters*

The real stars

JODHPUR, India—White horses, elephants and priests blowing conch horns were to star in the Hindu nuptials of actress Elizabeth Hurley, who wrapped up a week of lavish wedding celebrations in India on Friday. *Reuters*

glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN CENTER AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! Ayala Malls

AT THE CINEMAS

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729 7777

THX

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING	2 300	3 THE HITCHER	4 YOU GOT ME			
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	2 THE GOOD SHEPHERD	3 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS				
	4 NOTES ON A SCANDAL	5 FLUSHED AWAY/ LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA	6 300	7 YOU GOT ME			
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	2 300					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS					
	3 NOTES ON A SCANDAL GUARANTEED SEATS	4 THE GOOD SHEPHERD GUARANTEED SEATS	5 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS GUARANTEED SEATS				
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS					
	3 300	4 YOU GOT ME	5 THE GOOD SHEPHERD				
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 300	2 THE HITCHER	3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING	4 YOU GOT ME			
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 300	2 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS					
	3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD	4 THE HITCHER	5 YOU GOT ME				

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FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

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GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
BPI Express Credit Installment Madness February 28 to March 18, 2007	Anson's Exhibit March 5 to 23, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Looney Tunes presents Lights, Camera... Showtime! March 16 to 18, 2007	Looney Tunes presents Lights, Camera... Showtime! March 9 to 11, 2007

GREENBELT Greenbelt 5 Sneak Peek presents Collection of Lila Almario March 7 to 18, 2007

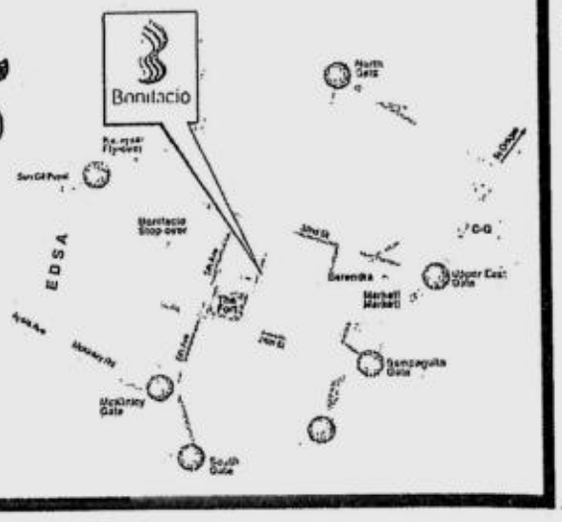
Onstage Repertory Philippines presents GAY BIRDS at REP's Globe Theater - March 16 to April 1, 2007 For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710

Ayala MUSEUM CHINESE DIASPORA: Art Streams from the Mainland (six shows) February 15 to March 27, 2007 For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

Kids Play at Bonifacio High Street (in front of Krispy Kreme)

Activities:
- Face Painting
- Caricatures
- Glimmer Tattoos
- Balloon Sculpting
- Sand Art Station
- Magnet Painting Station

Bonifacio Global City, Taguig
Mar 3 & 4, Mar 10 & 11
4pm - 7pm



Bonifacio Bonifacio High Street forward taguig

JOINT PROPERTY AUCTION

PNB — ALLIED BANK

as much as **35%** discount on lots — as low as **10%** interest

CEBU - LEYTE - SAMAR

MARCH 22, 2007 • THURSDAY • 2:00 PM • MANGO PARK HOTEL General Maxilom Avenue, Cebu City

PRIME PROPERTIES

BOHOL

ITEM 01 - beach resort w/ admin bldg.restaurant, swimming pool, five 2-room cottages & four room cottage w/c were given salvage value
Lot Area: 24,385.00 sqm.
Floor Area: Building 396, Rest 518, Pool 300, Duplex 410, 4-room cottage 368 sqm.
Bil-Isan, Panglao
Market Value: 43,000,000.00
Min. Bid Price: 36 000,000.00

CEBU

ITEM 02 - beach resort, improved w/ single-storey guest room, 2-storey admin/office, 2-storeyguest house(lot 2), 2-storeyduplex type guest house, res-taurant, CHB fence, swimmingpool, 2-storey guest house(giftshop), 2-storey guest room
Lot Area: 9,506.00 sqm.
Marigondon, Suba-Basbas
Market Value: 58,000,000.00
Min. Bid Price: 50,000,000.00

ITEM 03 - Commercial Lots with 9-storey bldg., 3-storey warehouse
Lot Area: 7,046.00 sqm.
P.Remedios Street, Brgy Banilad
Market Value: 125,000,000.00
Min. Bid Price: 93,750 000.00

ITEM 04 - Residential Lot
Lot Area: 379.00 sqm.
Lot 3, Blk-1 Singson Blvd., Guadalupe
Market Value: 1,980,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,530,000.00

ITEM 05 - Condominium Unit
Lot Area: 127.00 sqm.
22Nd Floor, Unit 5, Tower A, Winland Towers Condominium Capitol Site
Market Value: 3,300,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 2,700,000.00

ITEM 06 - Vacant Residential Lot
Lot Area: 160.00 sqm
Cebu Pyramid Subdivision
Market Value: 67,584.00
Minimum Bid Price: 49,152.00

ITEM 07 - Vacant Residential Lot
Lot Area: 732.00 sqm
Lot 548 Brgy Opao
Market Value: 825,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 637,500.00

ITEM 08 - Vacant Residential Lot
Lot Area: 518.00 sqm
Brgy Pagsabungan
Market Value: 770,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 595,000.00

ITEM 09 - Residential Lot, improved w/ 2-storey residential building
Lot Area: 250.00 sqm
Lot 3 Villa Quijano, Forest Hills
Market Value: 2,640,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 2,160,000.00

ITEM 010 - Vacant Residential Lot
Lot Area: 400.00 sqm.
Lots 3 & 4, Blk-2 Villa Quijano, Forest Hills
Market Value: 2,200,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,800,000.00

ITEM 11 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 2,832.00 sqm.
Lot 18426 San Carlos Heights, Pardo, Cebu City
Market Value: 4,248,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 3,186,000.00

ITEM 12 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 150.00 sqm.
Lot 2 Block 24 Wisteria Lane, South Hills Subd., Labangon Cebu City
Market Value: 675,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 641,000.00

ITEM 13 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 6,657.00 sqm.
Lot 18680 San Carlos Heights Pardo, Cebu City
Market Value: 3,115,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 2,800,000.00

ITEM 14 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 533.00 sqm.
Lot 1319-B-2C-20 Near Laguerta Road, Lahug, Cebu City
Market Value: 692,900.00
Minimum Bid Price: 554,000.00

ITEM 15 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 460.00 sqm.
Lot 26-D Block 21, South Hills Subd., Tisa, Cebu City
Market Value: 1,840,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,380,000.00

ITEM 16 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 1,276.00 sqm
Lot 5756-A Along Cebu South Road, Basak San Nicolas, Cebu City
Market Value: 6,380,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 3,509,000.00

ITEM 17 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 612.00 sqm
Lots 70 & 71 Road Lot 83, Sabang, Danao City
Market Value: 1,705,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,646,843.28

ITEM 18 - LOT WITH MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 2,038.00 sqm.
Lot 4374-D-1 & 4374-D-2 Sitio Soong, Brgy Mactan, Lapulapu City
Market Value: 3,261,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 2,827,779.60

ITEM 19 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 232.00 sqm
Floor Area: 176.00 sqm
Lot 837C-2-C-2 Hermag Village, Basak, Mandaue City
Market Value: 1,500,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,200,000.00

ITEM 20 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 500.00 sqm
Floor Area: 250.00 sqm.
Lot 2306-D Sitio Pangpang, San Isidro, Talisay City
Market Value: 900,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 720,000.00

ITEM 21 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 253.00 sqm
Floor Area: 660.00 sqm
Lot3286-B-I-A Tabunok Public Market, Tabunok, Talisay City
Market Value: 6,255,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 6,255,000.00

EASTERN SAMAR

ITEM 22 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 240.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 258.00 sqm.
Pag-Asa St., Karapdapan, Arteche, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 98.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 88.000.00

ITEM 23 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 1.244.00 sqm.
Lot 19312 Brgy., Sta. Fe, Borongan. Eastern Samar
Market Value: 19,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 14,000.00

ITEM 24 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 149.00 sqm
Lot 8809, Brgy., Libutan, Borongan, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 75,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 71 000.00

ITEM 25 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 239.00 sqm
Lot 21129, National Road, Brgy., Labunan, Borongan, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 120,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 108 000.00

ITEM 26 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 2,611.00 sqm.
Lot 17184, National Road, Brgy. Bugas, Borongan Eastern Samar
Market Value: 47,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 38.000.00

ITEM 27 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 2,038.00 sqm
Lot 2169, Brgy. Campesao, Borongan, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 186,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 130,000.00

ITEM 28 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 757.00 sqm.
2080-A Interior San Pedro St., Borongan, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 265 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 225 000.00

ITEM 29 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 70 412.00 sqm.
Lot 9553 / 9548 / 9568 / 11379 Brgy Msiha, Borongan, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 49,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 34.000.00

ITEM 30 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 457.00 sqm.
17160 National Road, Magitad, Bugas Borongan, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 183 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 165 000.00

ITEM 31 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 446.00 sqm.
Lot 2189 Bgy Carolina Can-Avid, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 178,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 169 000.00

ITEM 32 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 1,111.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 202.00 sqm.
Lot 7-B National Road, Brgy. Lunang Dolores, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 1,440,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1.152 000.00

ITEM 33 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 140.00 sqm
3449 Carolina St., Brgy 12 Dolores, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 70.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 56 000.00

ITEM 35 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 984.00 sqm.
3445-A Carolina St., Dolores, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 197,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 138 000.00

ITEM 36 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 2,850.00 sqm
Lot 998, Pls-774-D Real St., Extension, Dolores, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 570,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 485 000.00

ITEM 37 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 101.92 sqm.
Lot 070 National Road/ Concepcion/San Roque Sts., Paya Gponis, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 25,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 24 000.00

ITEM 38 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 400.00 sqm.
3933 Brgy. Bagoiro, Camada, Maydolong, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 40 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 38 000.00

ITEM 39 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 237.00 sqm.
3029 Brgy Nena, San Julian, Eastern Samar
Market Value: 71,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 67,000.00

ITEM 40 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 37,000.00 sqm
Brgy Catupad & Pangpang, Sn Policarpio Eastern Samar
Market Value: 36 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 27 000.00

LEYTE

ITEM 41 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 43.023.00 sqm
Lot 10042 Brgy. Pilogo, Barugo, Leyte
Market Value: 65.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 49 000.00

ITEM 42 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 197.00 sqm
Lot 029 Tres Martires St., Baybay, Leyte
Market Value: 1 379 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,172 000.00

ITEM 43 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 851.00 sqm.
Lot 771-D M.L. Quezon St., Baybay, Leyte
Market Value: 1,702,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,362,000.00

ITEM 44 - COMMERCIAL
Lot Area: 500.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 492.00 sqm.
Lot 328-B M L. Quezon St., Baybay, Leyte
Market Value: 3.407,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 3,237 000.00

ITEM 045 - Industrial/ Commercial Lot
Lot Area: 5,575.00 sqm.
Lot 659 Along R. Magsaysay Avenue
Market Value: 11.038 500.00
Minimum Bid Price: 8 628.000.00

ITEM 46 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 2,025.00 sqm.
Lot 10558 P. Canilo St., Ponong District, Carigara, Leyte
Market Value: 1,199 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 839,000.00

ITEM 47 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 745.00 sqm
Floor Area: 89.00 sqm
Lot 205-D-1 & 205-D-5 San Miguel St., Jawer, Leyte
Market Value: 291.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 233.000.00

ITEM 48 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 178,796.00 sqm.
Lot 10661 Interior Brgy., Montealegre Kananga, Leyte
Market Value: 715.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 501 000.00

ITEM 49 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 115,058.00 sqm.
Lot Nos. 12360/12039/12359 Interior Brgy. Montealegre, Kananga, Leyte
Market Value: 460.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 345 000.00

ITEM 50 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 218.00 sqm
Lot 1 Blk. 14 Poblacion, La Paz, Leyte
Market Value: 65.400.00
Minimum Bid Price: 56 000.00

ITEM 51 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 226.00 sqm
Lot 2 Blk. 14 Poblacion, La Paz, Leyte
Market Value: 67.800.00
Minimum Bid Price: 58 000.00

ITEM 52 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 204.00 sqm.
Lot 3 Blk. 14 Poblacion, La Paz, Leyte
Market Value: 40 800.00
Minimum Bid Price: 35 000.00

ITEM 53 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 204.00 sqm.
Lot 4 Blk. 14 Poblacion, La Paz, Leyte
Market Value: 40 800.00
Minimum Bid Price: 35.000.00

ITEM 54 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 204.00 sqm.
Lot 5 Blk. 14 Poblacion, La Paz, Leyte
Market Value: 40 800.00
Minimum Bid Price: 35 000.00

ITEM 55 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 294.00 sqm
Lot 6 Blk. 14 Poblacion, La Paz, Leyte
Market Value: 58.800.00
Minimum Bid Price: 50 000.00

ITEM 56 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 3,551.00 sqm.
Lot#54-A,N.Vivero St.(Former Calle Cinco),La Paz,Leyte
Market Value: 533.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 373 000.00

ITEM 57 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 160.00 sqm
Poblacion, Mahaplag, Leyte
Market Value: 48 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 41 000.00

ITEM 58 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 342.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 200.00 sqm
Cor. Rizal & Magsaysay St., Pob., Mahaplag, Leyte
Market Value: 831.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 665 000.00

ITEM 59 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 856.00 sqm
Lot 5210-E-4 & Lot 5210-E-17 Interior Road Lot,Brgy Linao Ormoc City
Market Value: 559 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 447.000.00

ITEM 60 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 597.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 379.00 sqm.
Lot 1&2 Blk.15 Berlin St.,Cor Washington ,Dona Felisa Mejia Subdivision Ormoc City
Market Value: 2.045,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,534 000.00

ITEM 61 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 2,741.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 475.00 sqm
Lot 2-M-2 Sto Nino Ave., Cor Washington St., Dona Felisa Mejia Subd., Brgy Cogon, Ormoc City
Market Value: 5,686,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 4 265,000.00

ITEM 62 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 2,121.00 sqm.
Lot 8409-A-6 Francisco Tan St., Valencia Ormoc City
Market Value: 742 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 631 000.00

ITEM 63 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 109.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 159.00 sqm
Lot 1 & 2 Capt. G. Alfaro St., Brgy. San Jose San Juan, Leyte
Market Value: 641,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 609 000.00

ITEM 64 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 214 18 sqm
Lot 447 Corner Of Roxas And Del Pilar Sts., Tabontabon, Leyte
Market Value: 42.836.00
Minimum Bid Price: 39 000.00

ITEM 65 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 200.46 sqm
Lot 446 Corner Of Roxas And Del Pilar Sts., Tabontabon, Leyte
Market Value: 40.092.00
Minimum Bid Price: 36.000.00

ITEM 66 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 213.68 sqm
Lot 445 Corner Of Roxas And Del Pilar Sts., Tabontabon, Leyte
Market Value: 42.736.00
Minimum Bid Price: 38,000.00

ITEM 67 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 221.77 sqm
Lot 444 Corner Of Roxas And Del Pilar Sts., Tabontabon, Leyte
Market Value: 44.354.00
Minimum Bid Price: 40 000.00

ITEM 68 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 112.00 sqm.
Lot 517-A-4 Interior Sta Cruz & Salazar Sts .Quarry District Tacloban City
Market Value: 168,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 126,000.00

ITEM 69 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 759.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 210.00 sqm
Lot 2910-B Caibaan Road, Tacloban City
Market Value: 1 905,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,619,000.00

ITEM 70 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 432.00 sqm
Lot 1950-C2-B4-B Nat'L. Road Cor Subd. Road, Brgy 87, Camacho Subd., Manlurip, San Jose, Tacloban City
Market Value: 518,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 466 000.00

ITEM 71 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 224.00 sqm
Floor Area: 252.00 sqm.
Lot 5596-C-1 113-C, Interior Of P. Gomez St., Brgy. 21, Tacloban City
Market Value: 2.447,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1 958,000.00

ITEM 72 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 319.00 sqm
Floor Area: 74.00 sqm
Lot 1383-A 2Nd St. Rimas Paraiso San Jose Tacloban City
Market Value: 667 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 467 000.00

ITEM 73 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 12,054.00 sqm
Lot 4237-N Brgy. 93, Bagacay, Tacloban City
Market Value: 2,765,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 2 350 000.00

ITEM 74 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 1 903.00 sqm
1098-A-2 Tabo-An, Marasbaras, Tacloban City
Market Value: 476 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 333 000.00

ITEM 75 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 1 642.00 sqm.
Lot 918-E / 918-C / 918-A Brgy 62 Purok 3 Sagkahan Tacloban City
Market Value: 821,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 493 000.00

ITEM 76 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 3,172.00 sqm
Lot 2969 (Interior) Calanipawan, Tacloban City
Market Value: 1.586,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1 110 000.00

ITEM 77 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 535.00 sqm
Floor Area: 220.00 sqm
Lot 1379 San Jose St., Tacloban City
Market Value: 2,111.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1.689 000.00

ITEM 78 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 278.00 sqm
Floor Area: 186.00 sqm.
Lot 1115 Corner Buenavista & Don Dionisio Sts., Tanauan, Leyte
Market Value: 176,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 158 000.00

ITEM 79 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 279.00 sqm
Floor Area: 140.00 sqm.
Lot#3811 Brgy Quilao Tolosa,Leyte
Market Value: 1,210,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1.089,000.00

ITEM 080 - Residential Lot w/ 2-storey residential building, bakery & perimeter fence
Lot Area: 813.00 sqm
Floor Area: 2 storey Bldg 120.00 (1/F) 30.00(2/F) 144sqm/ Bakery
Brgy Rizal, Basak, Tuburan, Maasin City
Market Value: 1.650.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1 200 000.00

SAMAR

ITEM 81 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 191.00 sqm
Floor Area: 273.00 sqm.
Lot No. 22 No. 110, 112 114 Int. Of Mabiniave., Poblacion, Catbalogan, Samar
Market Value: 1,898,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,358,000.00

ITEM 82 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 638.00 sqm.
Lot 17 Brgy. Canlapwas, Catbalogan Samar
Market Value: 96 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 58 000.00

ITEM 83 - LOT W/ MINOR IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 575.00 sqm.
Lot 3771 Brgy. Road, Brgy. Buenavista I, San Jorge, Samar
Market Value: 86 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 60 000.00

BACOLOD

ITEM 084 - Eight (8) lots w/ 2-storey residential building
Lot Area: 1,956.00 sqm
Floor Area: 394.00(1/F) 153.00(2/F) sqm.
109- 110 Greenplains Subd., Brgy Singcang, Bacolod
Market Value: 8 250,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 6 000,000.00

ADDITIONAL PROPERTIES

ITEM 085 - COMMERCIAL LOT
Lot Area: 850.50 sqm
Lot 21 Humabon Ave., 4th Street, Cebu Port Center
Market Value: 11.500,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 10,000,000.00

CEBU/ BOHOL REGIONAL DESK

(VICENTE & CECILLE) Tel. No. (032) 412-1883 CEBU Branch: Tel. No. ((032) 253-8537
TACLOBAN Branch: Tel. No. (053) 523-3611 & (053) 321-9555

DAVAO

MARCH 29, 2007 • THURSDAY • 2:00 PM • GRAND REGAL HOTEL Km.7, J.P. Laurel Avenue, Bajada, Davao City

COMPOSTELA VALLEY

ITEM 1 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 801 sqm
L1795 Purok 8, Papaya St., Monkayo
Market Value: 64.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 48.000.00

ITEM 2 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 800 sqm
Lot 2375 Judge Cruz St., Monkayo
Market Value: 64.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 48.000.00

ITEM 3 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 800 30 sqm.
Lot 2093 No. 077 Glenn Kerr St., Pob., Monkayo
Market Value: 384,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 307,000.00

ITEM 4 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 300 sqm
Lot 13 Blk 11 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts. Km 100, Linoan, Montevista
Market Value: 24.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 19.000.00

ITEM 5 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 300 sqm
Lot 12 Blk 11 Prk 3-A Buenavista
Market Value: 24.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 19 000.00

ITEM 6 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 300 sqm.
Lot 15 Blk 11 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts. Km 100 Linoan, Montevista Com-Postela Valley
Market Value: 24 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 19.000.00

ITEM 7 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 400 sqm
Lot 19 Blk 10 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts. Km 100, Linoan Montevista
Market Value: 32 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 26,000.00

ITEM 8 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 400 sqm.
Lot 20 Blk 10 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts. Km 100, Linoan, Montevista
Market Value: 32 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 26 000.00

ITEM 9 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 400 sqm.
Lot 22 Blk 10 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts. Km 100 Linoan, Montevista Com-Postela Valley
Market Value: 32 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 26 000.00

ITEM 10 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 400 sqm
Lot 2 Blk 13 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts. Km 100, Linoan Montevista
Market Value: 32 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 24 000.00

ITEM 11 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 400 sqm
Lot 18 Blk 10 Prk 3-A Buenavista Hts. Km 100, Linoan, Montevista
Market Value: 32 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 26 000.00

ITEM 12 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 3,761 sqm. F. A.: 126 sqm.
Lot 1526-B Purok 5,Pagakpak Pantukan
Market Value: 914,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 777 000.00

ITEM 13 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 172 sqm F. A.: 113 sqm
Lot 18 Dao St., Poblacion Maco, Comval Province
Market Value: 209.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 157 000.00

DAVAO DEL NORTE

ITEM 14 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 1,000 sqm. F. A.: 327 sqm.
Lot 2529 Purok 2, Roxas Ave Poblacion New Corella
Market Value: 564.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 423 000.00

ITEM 15 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 1,000 sqm
Lot 1864 Magsaysay Ave., Purok 5 New Corella
Market Value: 70.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 56 000.00

ITEM 16 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 1,000 sqm.
Lot 1918 Magsaysay Ave., Pob. New Corella, Davao Del Norte
Market Value: 80 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 64 000.00

ITEM 17 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 338 sqm F. A.: 69 sqm
Lot 1089-B-5-D-6-E Purok 6, Pob. New Corella
Market Value: 206,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 165 000.00

ITEM 18 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 774 sqm. F. A.: 314 sqm
Lot 1090-B-2-C-6-A & 1090-B-2-6-B Romualdez Extn. St., New Corella
Market Value: 550,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 440.000.00

ITEM 19 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 1.000 sqm.
Lot 1865 Magsay-Say Ave. Purok 5 New Corella
Market Value: 80 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 64.000.00

ITEM 20 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 1,000 sqm
Lot 2112 Fr. Gomez St., Poblacion, New Corella
Market Value: 70.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 56.000.00

ITEM 21 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 707 sqm
Lot 2526, Along Irig St. New Corella
Market Value: 57.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 46.000.00

ITEM 22 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 1,412 sqm
Lots 2292 & 2291 Bonifacio St. Pob New Corella
Market Value: 92 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 74,000.00

ITEM 023 - Agricultural Lot
L. A.: 20,891 sqm.
Purok 18, Brgy Cuambugan, Mesaoy
Market Value: 313,365.00
Minimum Bid Price: 412 500.00

ITEM 24 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 900 sqm. F. A.: 822 sqm.
Lot 708-T-1 Purok Bayanihan, Visayan Village, Tagum City
Market Value: 1 513,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1 286 000.00

ITEM 25 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 250 sqm. F. A.: 48 sqm.
Lot 6441-C-5-D-5-M-1 Purok 3, Dunan Vil., San Miguel, Tagum City
Market Value: 298,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 224 000.00

ITEM 26 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 769 sqm. F. A.: 271 sqm.
Lot 586-D-5 Bermudez Subd Apokon, Tagum City
Market Value: 992,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 843,000.00

ITEM 27 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 170 sqm. F. A.: 177 sqm.
Lot 7-B-2-A Purok Malirawon, Zafra Subd., Biz Dist., Tagum City
Market Value: 618,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 464,000.00

ITEM 28 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 344 sqm F. A.: 206 sqm
Lot 406-G-2-B-3-B-3-B-1-A Purok Dunan, Seminary Drive, Tagum City
Market Value: 884,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 663,000.00

ITEM 29 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 1 004 sqm. F. A.: 75 sqm.
Lots 4488-D-1 & 4488-D-2 Purok 1, Rizal, Canocotan, Tagum City
Market Value: 555,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 416,000.00

ITEM 30 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 500 sqm
Lot 708-6 Manga I-B, Purok Bayanihan-Visayan Vil., Tagum City
Market Value: 700.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 525,000.00

ITEM 31 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 450 sqm
Lot 58 Narzal Con-Concepcion Subd. Upr La Union, Mankilam, Tagum City
Market Value: 86 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 69,000.00

ITEM 32 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 1,100 sqm
Lot 488-F-4-C-4-B-1 Ganle Rd 3, Tagum City
Market Value: 770,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 616 000.00

ITEM 33 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 485 sqm
Lot 387-G-15 D. Mencidor Subd., Tipaz, Tagum City
Market Value: 170,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 102,000.00

ITEM 34 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 515 sqm
Lot 5 Blk 4 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan, Tagum City
Market Value: 129,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 103,000.00

ITEM 35 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 500 sqm
L3 B3 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan, Tagum City
Market Value: 125,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 100,000.00

ITEM 36 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 500 sqm
L4 B3 Purok 2-A Tandang Sora St., Canocotan, Tagum City
Market Value: 125.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 100.000.00

ITEM 37 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 500 sqm
L5 B3 Purok 2-A Tandang Sora St., Canocotan, Tagum City
Market Value: 125.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 100,000.00

ITEM 38 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 500 sqm
L9 B3 Purok 2-A Tandang Sora St., Canocotan, Tagum City
Market Value: 125,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 100.000.00

ITEM 39 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 514 sqm
L2 B5 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan, Tagum City
Market Value: 129,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 103,000.00

ITEM 40 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 500 sqm
L6 B6 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan, Tagum City
Market Value: 125,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 100,000.00

ITEM 41 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 500 sqm
L7 B6 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan, Tagum City
Market Value: 125,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 100,000.00

ITEM 42 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 517 sqm
L14 B5 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan, Tagum City
Market Value: 129.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 103,000.00

ITEM 43 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 209 sqm
Lot 14 Blk 10 Purok 09, Norjam Subd., La Filipina, Tagum City
Market Value: 73,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 58,000.00

ITEM 44 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 425 sqm
Lot 15 Brgy. Mankilam, Tagum City
Market Value: 68,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 54,000.00

ITEM 45 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 425 sqm
Lot 16 Brgy. Mankilam, Tagum City
Market Value: 68.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 54 000.00

ITEM 46 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 425 sqm
Lot 11 Brgy. Mankilam, Tagum City
Market Value: 68,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 54,000.00

ITEM 47 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 459 sqm
Lot 10 Brgy. Mankilam, Tagum City
Market Value: 80,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 64 000.00

ITEM 48 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 308 sqm
Lot 9 Brgy. Mankilam, Tagum City
Market Value: 54,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 43.000.00

ITEM 49 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 450 sqm
Lot 35 Brgy. Mankilam, Tagum City
Market Value: 72,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 58,000.00

ITEM 50 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 450 sqm
Lot 34 Brgy. Mankilam, Tagum City
Market Value: 72,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 58.000.00

ITEM 51 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 450 sqm
Lot 73 Narzal Concepcion Subd Mankilam, Tagum City
Market Value: 72,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 58,000.00

ITEM 52 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 450 sqm
Lot 74 Narzal Concepcion Subd., Mankilam Tagum City
Market Value: 72,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 58 000.00

ITEM 53 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 448 sqm
Lot 77 Narzal Concepcion Subd., Mankilam Tagum City
Market Value: 78,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 62,000.00

ITEM 54 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 450 sqm
Lot 76 Narzal Concepcion Subd., Mankilam Tagum City
Market Value: 72.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 58 000.00

ITEM 55 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 448 sqm
Lot 78 Narzal Concepcion Subd. Mankilam Tagum City
Market Value: 78.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 62,000.00

ITEM 56 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 450 sqm
Lot 75 Narzal Concepcion Subd. Mankilam Tagum City
Market Value: 72 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 58 000.00

DAVAO DEL SUR

ITEM 057 - Residential Lots
L. A.: 2,619 sqm.
Cabantian, Buhangin
Market Value: 1,300 500.00
Minimum Bid Price: 209 520.00

ITEM 58 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 10,092 sqm
Lot 945-B, Sitio Escuela Bula, Catalunan Grande, Talomo District, Davao City
Market Value: 606 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 424 000.00

ITEM 59 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 4,800 sqm
Lot 536-A-2 Interior, Tigatto Buhangin District, Davao City
Market Value: 2.860,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1.584 000.00

ITEM 60 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 245 sqm.
Lot 8 Blk 3 Hinundayan Homes, Dumoy, Toril, Davao City
Market Value: 417.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 395 000.00

ITEM 61 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 134 sqm.
Lot 5 No 83 Buhangin Road, Buhangin Dist., Davao City
Market Value: 536.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 402 000.00

ITEM 62 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 500 sqm
Lot 28 Interior Indangan, Buhangin Dist., Davao City
Market Value: 125 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 94,000.00

ITEM 063 - Commercial Lot w/ 3-storey bldg
L. A.: 5,090 sqm
Lot B-2 Home Essentials, J.P. Laurel Ave.
Market Value: 49 144,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 41 400 000.00

ITEM 064 - Vacant Residential/ Industrial lot
L. A.: 9,200 sqm.
Lot 16 Int. Pareñas St., Diversion Rd. Km 8, Bo Cabantian, Buhangin
Market Value: 5,520,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 3,910,000.00

ITEM 065 - Agricultural Lot
L. A.: 9,200 sqm
16 Interior Pareñas St., Diversion Road, Km 8 Buhangin
Market Value: 6 617,240.00
Minimum Bid Price: 3,910 000.00

ITEM 66 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 10 000 sqm
Lot 2-A Trese De Mayo, Digos City
Market Value: 2 000 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,600 000.00

ITEM 67 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 726 sqm F. A.: 386 sqm
Lot 3 Blk 6 Del Pilar St., Digos City
Market Value: 1 623 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1 380 000.00

ITEM 68 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 4,940 sqm
Lot 12-G-9-F Subd. Road, Cagape Subd., San Jose, Digos City
Market Value: 2,470,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1 976 000.00

ITEM 69 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 198 sqm
Lot 17 Blk 7 Ruparan, Digos City
Market Value: 39 600.00
Minimum Bid Price: 32,000.00

ITEM 70 - AGRILAND
L. A.: 49,891 sqm
Lot 2154, Cad 275 Pilong Gatang Sinawilan
Market Value: 490 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 368 000.00

ITEM 71 - LOT WITH MINOR IMPVT.
L. A.: 1 795 sqm
Lot 5777-I-10 Poblacion Sulop
Market Value: 459 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 367 000.00

DAVAO ORIENTAL

ITEM 72 - AGRILAND
L. A.: 10 000 sqm
Lot 3470-B, Psd-11-001623 Bo Bagsak Banaybanay
Market Value: 240.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 180 000.00

ITEM 73 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 1,039 sqm F. A.: 153 sqm
Lot 5 Brgy. Piso, Banay-Banay
Market Value: 719 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 575 000.00

ITEM 74 - AGRILAND
L. A.: 42 008 sqm
Lot 2435-A Brgy. Ilangay, Lupon
Market Value: 840 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 672 000.00

ITEM 75 - AGRILAND
L. A.: 50,000 sqm.
Lot 2515-B Brgy., Ilangay, Lupon
Market Value: 1,000 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 700 000.00

ITEM 76 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 2,231 sqm. F. A.: 293 sqm.
Lot No. 1 Comara St., Pob., Lupon
Market Value: 1 991 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1 593 000.00

ITEM 77 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 790 sqm.
Lot 1579-A Along National Highway San Ignacio Manay
Market Value: 218,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 185 000.00

ITEM 78 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 288 sqm.
Lot 281-C Bato St. Pob Manay
Market Value: 346.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 311 000.00

ITEM 79 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 15,791 sqm
Lot 464 Lawigan, Mati
Market Value: 71,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 46 000.00

ITEM 80 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 378 sqm.
L1 Blk 2 Lower Kapayas, Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 113,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 85 000.00

ITEM 81 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 2,821 sqm
Lot D-4-B Interco Drive, Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 762 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 572 000.00

ITEM 82 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 898 sqm
Lot-2-D-7-1 Madang, Bo Of Central Mati
Market Value: 443 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 355 000.00

ITEM 83 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 524 sqm F. A.: 532 sqm
Lot 3 Blk 14 Sto Nino, Poblacion Mati
Market Value: 4,019,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 2 612 000.00

ITEM 84 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 1,551 sqm
Lot 5424, 5324-A & 5364-H Lower Apayas, Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 453.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 362,000.00

ITEM 85 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 486 sqm.
Lot 1777-J Lower Apayas, Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 131 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 105 000.00

ITEM 86 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 179 sqm F. A.: 148 sqm
Lot 3814-I-3 Along Don S. Garcia St. Upper Salazar Mati
Market Value: 346 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 311,000.00

ITEM 87 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 221 sqm
Lot 8 Blk 14 Sibala Village, Lower Kapayas, Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 55 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 44,000.00

ITEM 88 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 499 sqm
Lot 1777-H Road Lot 1777-T Lower Kapayas, Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 135 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 108,000.00

ITEM 89 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 499 sqm
Lot 1777-G Road Lot 1777-T Lower Kapayas, Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 135 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 108,000.00

ITEM 90 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 216 sqm
Lot 6 Blk 14 Sibala Village, Lower Kapayas, Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 54 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 43,000.00

ITEM 91 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 2,104 sqm
Lot 4-L-2-I Adjacent To Lopez Village Subd., Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 631 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 442 000.00

ITEM 92 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 240 sqm. F. A.: 173 sqm.
Lot 18 & 19 Blk 3 Camia St., Don Luis Village, Madang, Mati
Market Value: 557.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 418 000.00

ITEM 93 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 448 sqm.
Lot D-7-G Purok Malambo-On, Interior Interco Drive, Matiao
Market Value: 99 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 79,000.00

ITEM 94 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 499 sqm.
Lot 1777-I Lower Kapayas Matiao,Mati
Market Value: 115,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 98.000.00

ITEM 95 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 499 sqm.
Lot 1777-B Lower Kapayas,Matiao Mati
Market Value: 150.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 120 000.00

ITEM 96 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 449 sqm
Lot 5369-A Lower Kapayas,Matiao Mati
Market Value: 135 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 115,000.00

ITEM 97 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 292 sqm
Lot 8 Blk 16 Sibala Village Lower Kapayas Matiao Mati
Market Value: 82 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 70,000.00

ITEM 98 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 399 sqm.
Lot 14 Blk 38 Madang,Bo Of Central Mati
Market Value: 259 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 220 000.00

ITEM 99 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 464 sqm.
Lot 600-B-2-G-1 Interior Dalicor Road,Matiao Mati
Market Value: 211 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 137 000.00

ITEM 100 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 20,000 sqm.
Lot 1-B & D Upper Kapayas Don Martin Marundan,Matiao Mati
Market Value: 1,312,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 984 000.00

ITEM 101 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 223 sqm
Lot 19 Blk 12 Sibala Village Lower Kapayas,Matiao,Mati
Market Value: 56,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 45 000.00

ITEM 102 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 500 sqm
Lot 1777-O Lower Kapayas Matiao,Mati
Market Value: 160,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 120 000.00

ITEM 103 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 1,000 sqm
Lot 505-B-25 Rizal St Limatoc Mati
Market Value: 1,417.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,275 000.00

ITEM 104 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 600 sqm
Lot 5312-E Interior Lot W/O Rrow Purok Pakikisama Pagamulang Road, Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 120 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 66 000.00

ITEM 105 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 238 sqm
Lot 2-D-7-G Subd. Rd. Madang Mati
Market Value: 119.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 95,000.00

ITEM 106 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 300 sqm
Lot 303-C-6-C Lemante Village Calagundian, Mati
Market Value: 120 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 120,000.00

ITEM 107 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 120 sqm
Lot 26 Blk 4 Madang, Bo Of Central Mati
Market Value: 72,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 65,000.00

ITEM 108 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 120 sqm
Lot 12 Blk 5 Jasmin St., Don Luis Vill., Mati
Market Value: 72,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 58,000.00

ITEM 109 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 120 sqm
Lot 18 Blk 5 Jasmin St., Don Luis Vill., Mati
Market Value: 72,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 58,000.00

ITEM 110 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 120 sqm
Lot 28 Blk 6 Road Lot A, Don Luis Vill., Mati
Market Value: 66.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 53 000.00

ITEM 111 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 120 sqm
Lot 29 Blk 8 Camia St., Don Luis Vill., Mati
Market Value: 72,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 58,000.00

ITEM 112 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 292 sqm
Lot 13 Blk 35 Madang, Bo. Of Central Mati
Market Value: 161 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 129,000.00

ITEM 113 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 282 sqm
Lot 14 Blk 35 Madang, Bo. Of Central Mati
Market Value: 169,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 135,000.00

ITEM 114 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 349 sqm
Lot 5 Blk 29 Madang, Bo. Of Central Mati
Market Value: 209 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 178 000.00

ITEM 115 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 542 sqm
Lot 13 Blk 27 Madang, Bo. Of Central Mati
Market Value: 217,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 174,000.00

ITEM 116 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 448 sqm
Lot 15 Blk 32 Madang,Bo. Of Central Mati
Market Value: 246,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 209 000.00

ITEM 117 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
L. A.: 433 sqm
Lot 15 Blk 26 Madang, Bo. Of Central Mati
Market Value: 397,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 318,000.00

ITEM 118 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 281 sqm
Lot 12 Blk 12 Sibala Village Lower Kapayas, Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 75 870.00
Minimum Bid Price: 65,000.00

ITEM 119 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 269 sqm
Lot 13 Blk 12 Sibala Village Lower Kapayas, Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 72,630.00
Minimum Bid Price: 62,000.00

ITEM 120 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 805 sqm
Lot 1776-C-2-B-2-E Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 242,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 206,000.00

ITEM 121 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 545 sqm
Lot 5 Blk 2 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 163,500.00
Minimum Bid Price: 139,000.00

ITEM 122 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 579 sqm
Lot 4 Blk 2 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 173,760.00
Minimum Bid Price: 148,000.00

ITEM 123 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 380 sqm
Lot 1 Blk 1 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 114.000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 97,000.00

ITEM 124 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 336 sqm
Lot 4 Blk 1 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 100,800.00
Minimum Bid Price: 86,000.00

ITEM 125 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 336 sqm
Lot 5 Blk 1 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 100,800.00
Minimum Bid Price: 86,000.00

ITEM 126 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 285 sqm.
Lot 1 Blk 8 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 71,250.00
Minimum Bid Price: 61,000.00

ITEM 127 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 231 sqm
Lot 2 Blk 8 Sibala Village Lower Kapayas Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 57,750.00
Minimum Bid Price: 49,000.00

ITEM 128 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 238 sqm
Lot 3 Blk 8 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 59,500.00
Minimum Bid Price: 51,000.00

ITEM 129 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 419 sqm
Lot 4 Blk 8 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 104,750.00
Minimum Bid Price: 89,000.00

ITEM 130 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 266 sqm
Lot 1 Blk 5 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 66.500.00
Minimum Bid Price: 57 000.00

ITEM 131 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 210 sqm
Lot 2 Blk.5 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 52.500.00
Minimum Bid Price: 45 000.00

ITEM 132 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 210 sqm
Lot 3 Blk.5 Sibala Village,Lower Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 52,500.00
Minimum Bid Price: 45 000.00

ITEM 133 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 852 sqm
Lot 634-E Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 128,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 109 000.00

ITEM 134 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 300 sqm
Lot 634-A-5 Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 60 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 51 000.00

ITEM 135 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 300 sqm
Lot 634-A-6 Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 60 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 51 000.00

ITEM 136 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 300 sqm
Lot 634-A-7 Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 60 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 51,000.00

ITEM 137 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 300 sqm
Lot 634-A-8 Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 60 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 51 000.00

ITEM 138 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 300 sqm.
Lot 634-A-9 Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 60 000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 51 000.00

ITEM 139 - VACANT LOT
L. A.: 299 sqm
Lot 634-A-10 Kapayas,Matiao, Mati
Market Value: 59,800.00
Minimum Bid Price: 51,000.00

ITEM 0140 - agricultural lot
L. A.: 50,000 sqm.
Don Luisito Rabat Ave., Magapo
Market Value: 15.000,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 11,250,000.00

ITEM 0141 - commercial lot w/ 2-storey, commercial bldg
L. A.: 312 sqm.
F. A.: 2-storey Bldg. 206 79 (G/F) 184 19 (2/F) sqm.
Lot 71 Corner Mabini-Burgos Sts., Central Mati
Market Value: 2,351,784.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1 840,000.00

ITEM 0142 - residential lots
L. A.: 500 sqm
Lot B Unnamed Road Lot, Espino Subd., Bo Dumoy, Davao City
Market Value: 500,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 400 000.00

ITEM 0143 - residential lots
L. A.: 500 sqm
Lot C Unnamed Road Lot, Espino Subd. Bo Dumoy, Davao City
Market Value: 500,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 400 000.00

ITEM 0144 - residential lots
L. A.: 500 sqm
Lot D Unnamed Road Lot, Espino Subd., Bo Dumoy, Davao City
Market Value: 500,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 400,000.00

ITEM 0145 - Commercial Lot w/ 2-storey, Comm'l Bldg
L. A.: 312 sqm
71 Cor Mabini-Burgos Sts Central, Mati
Market Value: 936,000.00
Minimum Bid Price: 1,840 000.00

SULTAN KUDARAT

ITEM 0146 - Adjacent Lot
L. A.: 250 sqm
17 Proposed Intong Subd Near Belisario Subd, Intong
Market Value: 176,100.00
Minimum Bid Price: 240,000.00

ITEM 0147 - Adjacent Lot
L. A.: 250 sqm
18 Proposed Intong Subd Near Belisario Subd, Intong
Market Value: 176,100.00
Minimum Bid Price: 240 000.00

ITEM 0148 - Adjacent Lot
L. A.: 250 sqm
19 Proposed Intong Subd Near Belisario Subd, Intong
Market Value: 176,100.00
Minimum Bid Price: 240,000.00

SOUTHERN MINDANAO REGIONAL DESK

CRIS (0918-3193341) & MACOT (0919-4612012) Tel. No. | (082) 222-6836 DAVAO Branch: Tel. No. (082) 221-7021

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✓INTEREST RATES AS LOW AS 10%
✓PAYMENT TERMS UPTO 10 YEARS

✓ 10% DOWN PAYMENT FOR LOTS
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✓ DEPOSIT PHP 25,000.00 CASH, MANAGER'S CHECK (NO DEPOSIT NO PARTICIPATION)
✓ FOR INSTALLMENT BUYERS PLS. BRING PROOF OF INCOME (ITR, CERT. OF EMPLOYMENT, BANK STATEMENT, ETC.)

Please Call PNB-AMS SALES III - Auction Team
AUCTION INQUIRY: MANILA HEAD OFFICE
TEL NOs: (02) 832-2562 | 526-3131 | 891-6040

	Locals	Cell #
JOEY	2919	0921-7112238
JAY-R	4538	0917-8878431
VON	7212	0920-6701586

PNB ACCEPTS REAL ESTATE BROKERS

PROPERTIES FOR SALE ARE ON AN "AS IS WHERE IS" BASIS. PLEASE CONFIRM ATTENDANCE TO ENSURE SEATS.

'Batad' featured in San Jose …

From page G1

will premiere in LA on March 31 at the Wadsworth Theater. This trilogy of movies stars **Maricel Soriano, Cesar Montano, Ricky Davao, Michael V., Robert Arevalo, Carmi Martin** and **Lilia Dizon.**

This premiere and others to take place all over the US is a fundraiser for Gawad Kalinga, a movement spearheaded by INQUIRER's Filipino of the Year, **Tony Meloto**. Inquirer.net's story on Tony provides a good background about the grassroots movement that hopes to radically rebuild the country one family at a time: "In the 1980s, the Philippines gave the world People Power—a gift that came forth from Edsa that has kept on bringing democracy the world over. In the 1990s, there began what the world has come to embrace as the next, necessary, follow-up to People Power as political action. If People Power was a means for reclaiming freedom, something would have to address the need to build a thriving, substantive democracy.

"What began in 1999 with an effort to build a single house for the members of the Adduro family, who were living in a shanty of rusted GI sheets, cardboard boxes, plastic sheets and old tires, is now known as Gawad Kalinga. In this first decade of the present century, it has grown to represent the Philippines' next gift to humanity. Gawad Kalinga is becoming a global template for development—one that has expanded to Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and Cambodia, and that will soon open in East Timor, India, Nigeria and Nicaragua.

"And while Gawad Kalinga is about many people, its public face is that of one man: Tony Meloto."

Specifics

An e-mail by Fil-Am community leader **Prosy de la Cruz** that was forwarded to me had the specifics: "Gawad Kalinga's goal is to build 700,000 homes in seven years in the Philippines, and has now received the support of folks in Canada, Australia, Malaysia and London in providing funds to build homes in the Philippines. GK's Tony Meloto is now going to Africa and other countries to help build homes for the poor, using the housing development template in the Philippines."

"Paraiso" reflects GK's vision of hope, heroism and transformation. The movement's Web site provides synopses of the film's three stories:

"Umiyak Man Ang Langit (Even If Heaven Cries)" is based on Jocelyn's life experiences who lost loved ones in the mudslides of St. Bernard, S. Leyte. The story captures the pain, the internal struggles and the healing that takes place in all of us once faced with life-changing events.

"Ang Kapatid Kong Si Elvis (My Brother Elvis)" is a story, on a lighter note, centered on a boy who ate pebbles to satisfy his hunger and a GK volunteer's family who adopted him as their own. The story captures the challenges and rewards of being involved with GK.

"Marie" is a story based on how a tragic loss can be turned into a living legacy and a new beginning. **Marie Rose Abad** perished in the twin tower tragedy of 9/11. **Rudy Abad** honors his wife with a living legacy.

For love

The film's stars, music scorer **Ryan Cayabyab**, executive producer **Bobby Barreiro**, producers **Tony Gloria, Butch Jimenez** and **Tony Tuviera** and others involved reportedly waived their usual fees in the spirit of "bayanihan" to make "Paraiso." KG is also grateful to **Boy Montelibano** and **Cindy** of Unitel for subti-

'BATAD'/ G5

60 YEARS PNB Making a Global Imprint

ASSET MANAGEMENT SECTOR

We manage for best value

INVITATION TO BID

The Asset Management Sector of the Philippine National Bank (PNB) is inviting bidders to purchase by way of sealed bids in cash or installment and on "As-is Where-is" basis the following residential / commercial properties in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan Valley :

1) 3-storey building with extension located at Del Rosario street, Tuguegarao City; lot area 914 sqm, improvements 818 sqm; minimum bid price at **Php12,100,000.00.**

2) Adjacent lots with 4-storey building located at Don Domingo, Balzain, Tuguegarao City; lot area 1,383 sqm, improvements 1,065 sqm; minimum bid price at **Php 14,750,000.00.**

Terms of Payment : 25% advance deposit payable as follows :
10% deposit upon submission of bids; 15% balance on deposit payable within seven (7) days from receipt of Notice of Approval.
Terms of payment on remaining balance subject to Committee approval

Terms and Conditions :
a) Bidder should use the "Purchase Proposal Form" (available at the branch office) and accompanied with the 10% deposit of the offer Price.
b) The 10% deposit should be in Manager's or Cashier's Check and payable to 'PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK'
c) As a general rule, "no bid below the minimum bid shall be accepted"
d) If the bidder is a representative of a corporation, the representative must submit to the Bidding Committee a Secretary's Certificate or A Special Power of Attorney (SPA) to represent the said corporation.
e) PNB's decision is final and binding to the winning bidder. No withdrawal of bids shall be allowed once the winning bid has been selected and approved by PNB. Any withdrawal of bid by winning bidder shall result to forfeiture by PNB of deposit made
f) In the event the winning bidder failed to comply with the specified payment terms, the 10% deposit shall be forfeited as penalty and the sale shall be automatically cancelled.
g) PNB shall be responsible in the payment of Creditable Withholding Tax (CWT) up to the selling price only, and any excess shall be for The account of the winning bidder. All other expenses such as documentary stamp tax, transfer tax, registration fees and other fees which are related to the transfer of the title in the name of the winning bidder shall be for the exclusive account of the winning bidder.
h) PNB reserves the right to reject any or all bids at its sole discretion, waive any defect/s or informality on the bids received and accept the bid most advantageous to PNB but does not guarantee that any award shall be made.
i) PNB reserves the right to withdraw the offered property at any time before the deadline of submission of offers for any purpose.
j) PNB does not assume any obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify any bidder for any expense that may be incurred in the Bidding process

Submission Procedure : The sealed offer must be labeled **"Tuguegarao Public Sealed Bidding-Location of Property"** (as so indicated above)"

Sealed offer and check payment must be submitted not later than 3:00 p. m., March 20, 2007 (Tuesday) to **Mr. Donato G. Orzame Jr.**, Administrative Staff Assistant, **Philippine National Bank, Tuguegarao Branch**, Bonifacio street, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan

For clarification, please contact **Therese Avelino-Ong**, Assistant Vice President, Asset Management Sector at telephone number : (02) 526-3131 local 2482.

MMTA METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

SM Megamall / Shangri-La Cineplex (6th Floor Shangri-la Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City)
1 — 300
2 — 300
3 — PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
4 — THE GOOD SHEPHERD
PREMIERE: FLUSHED AWAY; THE HITCHER

Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati (Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City) Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 — 300
2 — PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 — YOU GOT ME
4 — THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Starmall (Mandaluyong) tel. 7266160
3 — 300
4 — PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
5 — RESRVED

Metropolis Star Cinema www.clickthecity.com.ph (ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 8433994
1 — YOU GOT ME
2 — DEAD PEOPLE-2
3 — 300
4 — PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

Theatres (SM Pacific Mall)
1 — GHOST RIDER
2 — YOU GOT ME
3 — NUMBER 23

Pacific Mall Lucena Cinemagic Tel (042) 660-5271
1 — YOU GOT ME
2 — GHOST RIDER
3 — RESRVED
4 — RESRVED

Filinvest Festival Cinema (Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 — THE HITCHER
2 — PRIMEVAL
3 — 300
4 — 300
5 — THE GOOD SHEPHERD
6 — PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
7 — GHOST RIDER
8 — DEAD PEOPLE-2
9 — BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
10 — YOU GOT ME

Blue Wave Marikina (Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927)
1 — YOU GOT ME
2 — 300
3 — PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
4 — RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
1 — PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 — 300
3 — YOU GOT ME
4 — DEAD PEOPLE-2
5 — GHOST RIDER

Marketplace Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 — PRIMEVAL
2 — BLOOD CHOCOLATE
3 — NUMBER 23
4 — RESERVED

Masagana Cinema (Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 — YOU GOT ME
2 — THE HITCHER
3 — EPIC MOVIE

Center Mall Cinema (Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)-4449346)
1 — 300
2 — THE FOUNTAIN

Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 — 300
2 — YOU GOT ME
3 — PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
4 — PRIMEVAL

Centre Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 — GHOST RIDER
2 — YOU GOT ME

Eastwood Cinemas (Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 — PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 — 300
3 — THE HITCHER; 300
4 — THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Cinema 2000 Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 — PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 — YOU GOT ME
3 — 300
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 — RESERVED
2 — RESERVED
3 — RESERVED
4 — RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6773
1 — APOCALYPTO
2 — YOU GOT ME
3 — GHOST RIDER

Cinema 2000 Metrotown (Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 — YOU GOT ME
2 — HANNIVAL RISING
3 — GHOST RIDER
4 — THE FOUNTAIN

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 — BLOOD CHOCOLATE
2 — EPIC MOVIE
3 — YOU GOT ME

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 — GHOST RIDER
2 — YOU GOT ME

Lianas Cinema (Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 — YOU GOT ME
2 — PRIMEVAL

Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 — DEAD PEOPLE-2
2 — BED TIME
3 — HULING BERHEN SA LUPA
4 — NUMBER 23

Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 — 300
2 — PEEP SHOW
3 — YOU GOT ME
4 — SUGAT WALANG PAGHILUM
5 — PURSUIT OF HAPYNESS

Fiesta World Mall (Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 — THE FOUNTAIN
2 — NUMBER 23
3 — PRIMEVAL
4 — YOU GOT ME

Berma Cinema (Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 — TROIKA
2 — NUMBER 23

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

"BATAD" star Nonie Buencamino

Maricel & Cesar have reportedly been invited to the LA preem but have not accepted

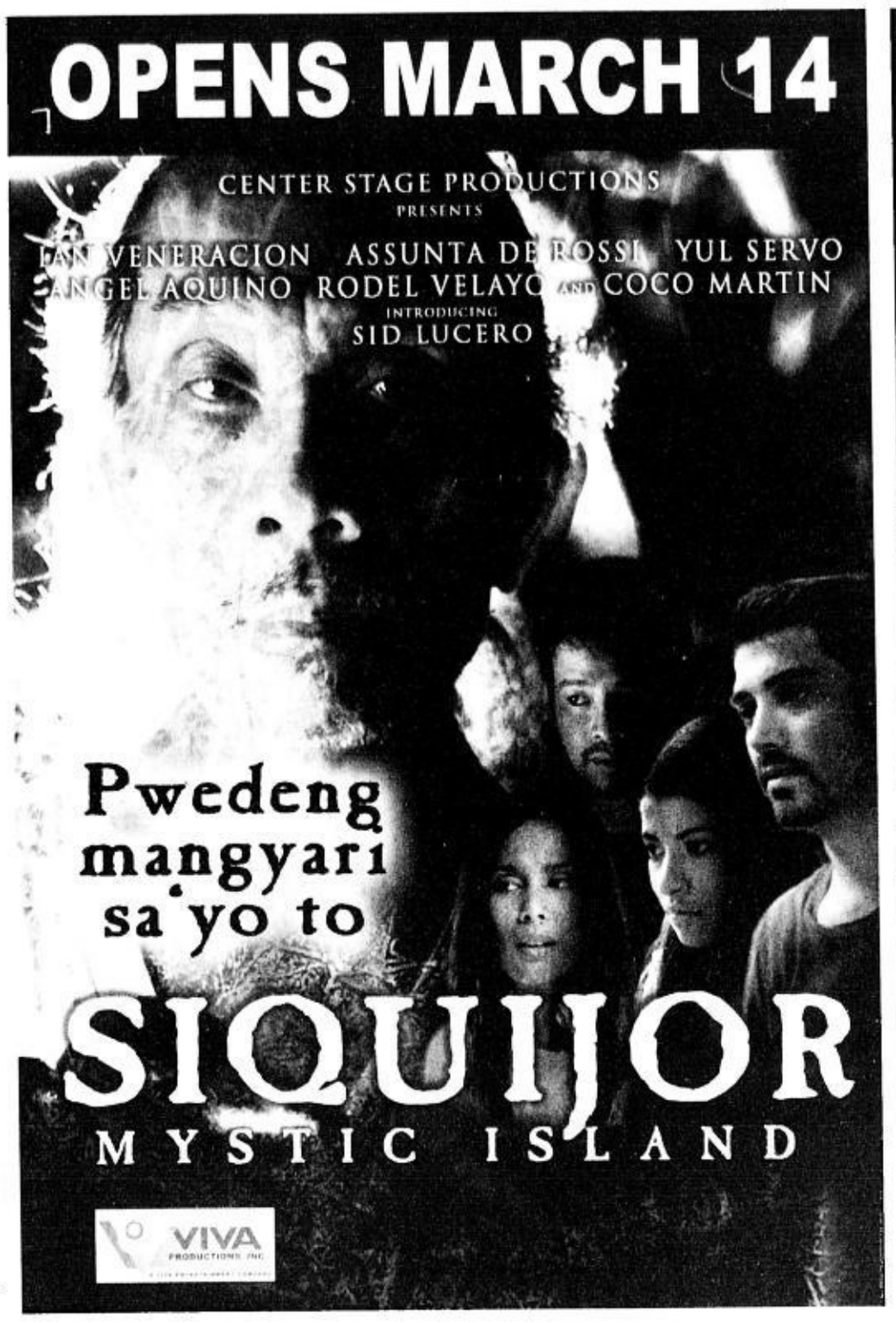
From page G4

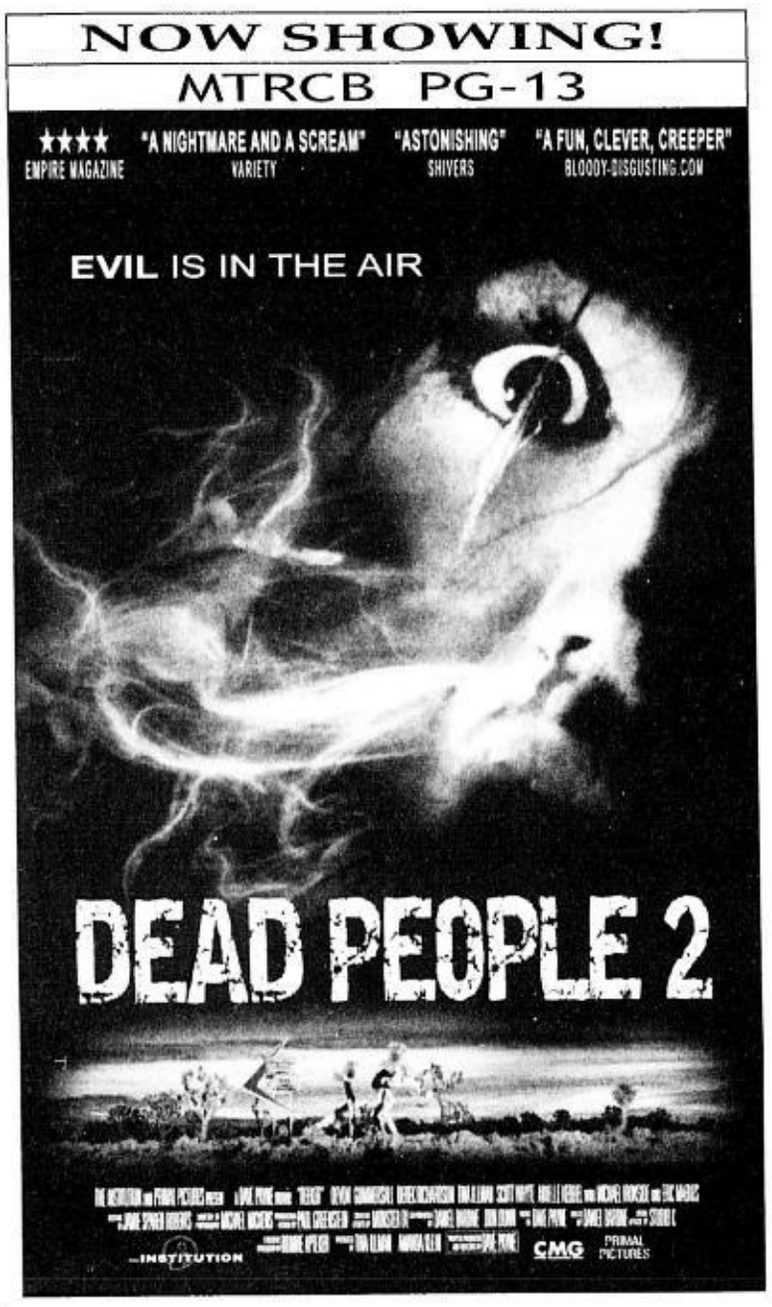
tling this trilogy.

Bravo to all!

Maricel, Cesar and the rest have reportedly been invited to grace the LA premiere but have not yet confirmed their attendance. The schedule of premieres across the US, from Sacramento to Orlando, is online at http://www.anco-pusa.org/wowgk/usa_screenings.htm.

E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com.





ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE

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FOR ALL BRANCHES

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

GALLERIA Ticket Price THX: P161 131 Indie Sine: 101 632-9118

1 A GOOD SHEPHERD • THX
12:00 3:20 6:40 10:00

2 300
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

3 THE HITCHER
1:25 3:30 5:35 7:40 9:50

4 DEAD PEOPLE 2
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

5 Reserved for VICTORY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

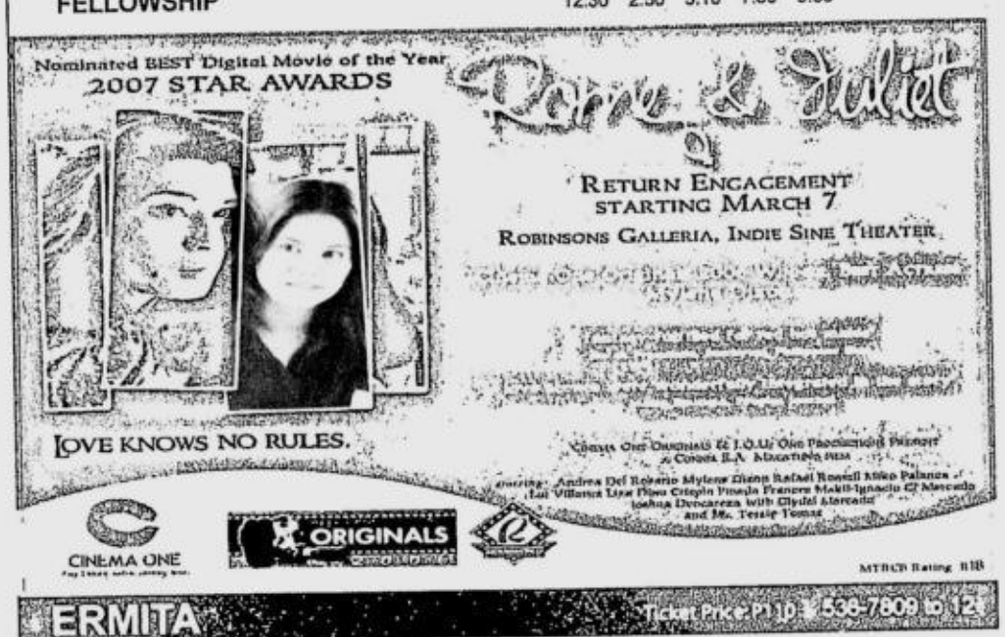
6 Reserved for VICTORY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

7 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

8 indieSine: ROME and JULIET
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

9 THE PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

10 YOU GOT ME
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50



ERMITA Ticket Price P110 / 538-7809 to 12

1 300
10:10 12:35 3:00 5:25 7:45 10:00

2 IT's A BOY GIRL THING 12:05 2:00 3:55
PRIMEVAL 6:00 8:00 10:00

5 THE HITCHER
10:20 12:35 2:50 5:05 7:30 10:00

3 A GOOD SHEPHERD
11:30 3:00 6:30 10:00

6 DEAD PEOPLE 2
10:20 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00

4 YOU GOT ME
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

7 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

METRO EAST Ticket Price: P100 / 682-8193 / 682-8199

1 THE NUMBER 23 12:50 2:50
BRIDGE of TERABITHIA 4:50 6:50 9:00

5 PRIMEVAL 12:30 2:40
GHOST RIDER 4:50 7:00 9:00

2 300
12:55 3:40 6:25 9:10

6 A GOOD SHEPHERD
11:00 2:10 5:30 9:00

3 YOU GOT ME
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

7 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00

4 THE HITCHER
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

8 DEAD PEOPLE 2
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

NOVALICHES Ticket Price: P97 / P86 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 300
2 YOU GOT ME
3 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
4 THE HITCHER

PIONEER Ticket Price: P100 / 687-5378

1 A GOOD SHEPHERD
1:40 5:00 8:20

2 300
1:15 3:45 6:15 8:40

3 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
1:15 3:45 6:15 8:40

4 THE HITCHER
12:25 2:30 4:35 6:40 8:40

STA ROSA Ticket Price: P80 (049) 837-0907

1 300
2 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
3 THE CLEANER
4 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
5 YOU GOT ME

LIPA Ticket Price: P90 (043) 757-3664 / (043) 312-5870

1 GHOST RIDER
2 YOU GOT ME
3 THE NUMBER 23
4 THE FOUNTAIN
5 PRIMEVAL

DASMARINAS Ticket Price: P80 (046) 416-4332

1 FLUSHED AWAY
2 300
3 YOU GOT ME
4 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS

ANGELES Ticket Price: P90 (045) 892-2348

1 300
2 YOU GOT ME
3 FLUSHED AWAY
4 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS

IMUS Ticket Price: P80 (046) 875-3839 / (046) 471-8188

1 300
2 PRIMEVAL
3 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
4 YOU GOT ME
5 FLUSHED AWAY

STARMILLS Ticket Price: P90 (045) 875-1927

1 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
2 TROIKA
3 YOU GOT ME
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 300
6 PRIMEVAL

BACOLOD Ticket Price: P70 (034) 441-0459

1 300
2 THE SPIRIT TRAP
3 YOU GOT ME
4 LITTLE CHILDREN
5 PRIMEVAL
6 THE MESSENGERS

ILOILO Ticket Price: P70.50 (033) 336-8070

1 300
2 YOU GOT ME
3 HANNIBAL RISING
4 PRIMEVAL
5 TROIKA
6 FLUSHED AWAY

Robinsons Movieworld and Independent Filmmakers Cooperative
MARCH 14 to 20, 2007
IndieSine, Robinsons Galleria

A stunning visual achievement, COMPOUND is a contemporary thriller that deals with the complexities of love, wealth and fear. A perfectly unexpected and well executed ending make this a film not to be missed.
Cleveland Int. Film Festival

"Malroso Place", as seen through the unflinching eyes of David Lynch and Mike de Leon.
- Paul Dela, Philippine Daily Inquirer

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PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
12:40, 3:10, 5:50, 8:30, 11:00
G

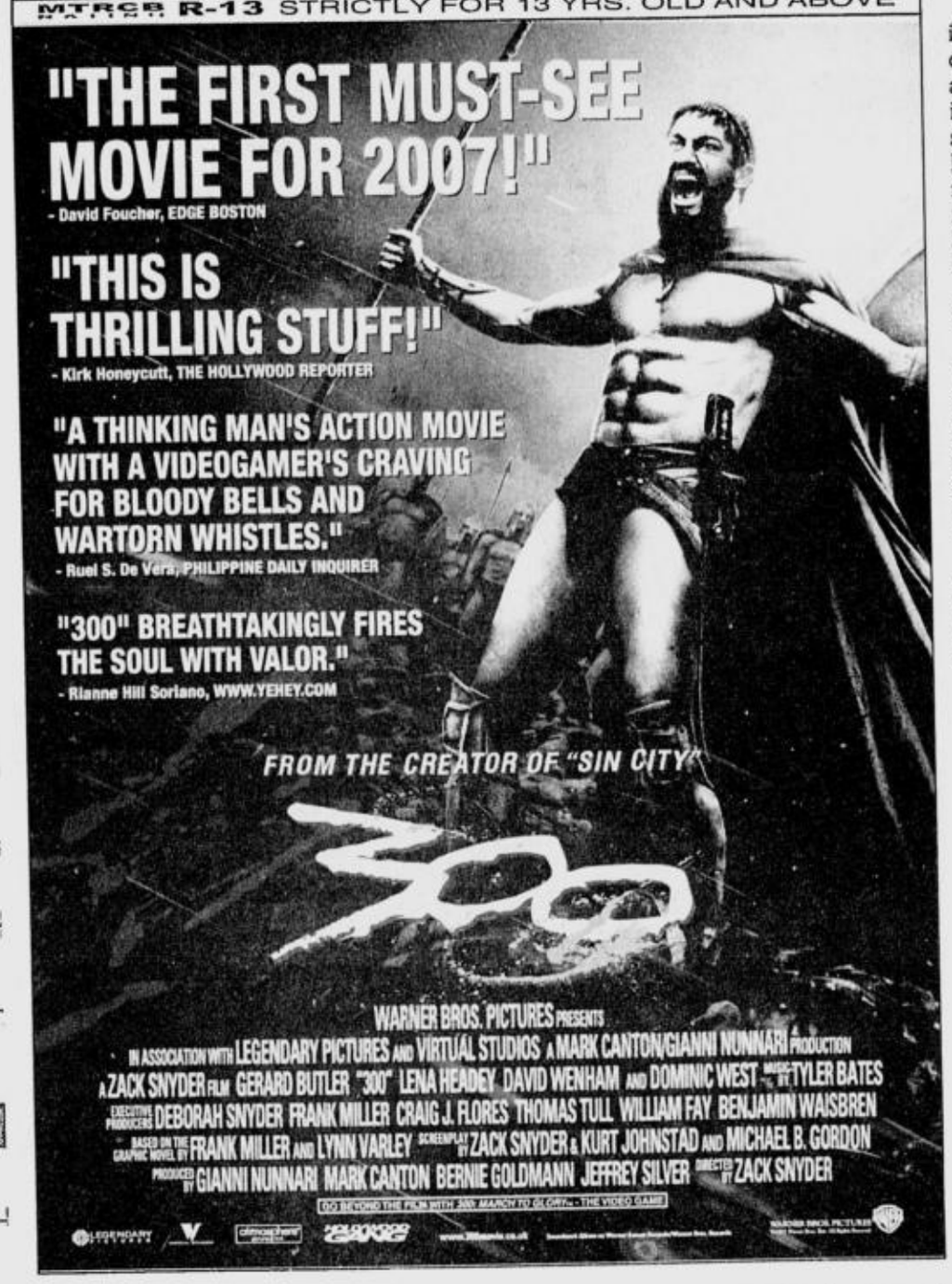
300
12:00, 2:35, 5:30, 8:30, 11:25
R-13

THE HITCHER
1:55, 4:10, 6:25, 8:40, 10:55
R-13

THE GOOD SHEPHERD
1:30, 4:50, 8:10, 11:20
R-13

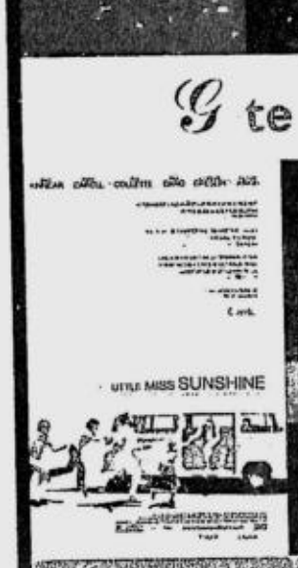
NOW SHOWING

MTRCB R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YRS. OLD AND ABOVE



Araneta Center
aranetacenter.net

Gateway MALL FarmersPlaza



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MICHAEL ARNDT
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Gateway CINEPLEX*10
FULL STADIUM SEATING

300
12:10 / 2:35 / 2:40 / 4:35 / 5:10 / 7:05 / 7:40 / 9:35 / 10:10

THE GOOD SHEPHERD
11:45 3:00 / 6:15 / 9:30

PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:50

THE HITCHER
12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9:30

DEAD PEOPLE 2
1:30 / 3:30 / 5:30 / 7:30 / 9:30

GHOST RIDER
4:50 / 9:40
BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
1:05 / 3:15 / 7:35

PLATINUM CINEMA

YOU GOT ME
12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30

MUSIC & LYRICS
5:25 / 9:45

IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
12:30 / 2:40 / 7:20

300
1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00

MALL 5

1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
12:20 / 3:00 / 5:40 / 8:20

2 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
12:10 R5 / 2:05 / 5:20 / 8:35

3 300
12:50 / 3:20 / 5:50 / 8:20

4 DEAD PEOPLE 2
12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:30

5 YOU GOT ME
12:00 R3 / 1:35 / 3:50 / 6:05 / 8:20

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Lani, Gary V at Big Dome on March 17

SHOW TIME

SINGER LANI MISalucha stars in "Lani Misalucha... Missing You" at the Araneta Coliseum on March 17.

Her guests are Gary Valenciano, Frenchie Dy and Mau Marcelo.

"I will also be dancing in the show," Lani says. "With Gary V on stage, I can't just stand still."

Lani's repertoire includes the most-requested and much-applauded numbers in her Las Vegas shows, as well as selections from her new self-titled album from Universal Records. Call 911-5555.

Concert repeat

A repeat of the pre-Valentine concert "Pilolo Pascual-Sam Milby, The Heartthrobs Concert" will be staged at the Aliw Theater on March 17.

The concert is produced by Star Records, Inc. in cooperation with ASAP Live Entertainment.

Call 9115555.

Benefit show

Raymond Lauchengco brings back his recent Valentine concert "Classic Romance 2: Walking On Sunshine" to Teatrino at the Promenade in Greenhills Shopping Complex on March 15, 22, 29, April 12 and 19.

The concert, for the benefit of Bagets Foundation, which helps educate out-of-school youths, was organized by the original cast members of the '80s hit movie, "Bagets."

The concert features Raymond with an 8-piece band complete with live blowing and rhythm sections under musical director Vic Oria. Call Ticketworld, 891-9999; Teatrino, 721-6726 or Bagets Foundation, 0920-9389004.

Concert series

Hard Rock Cafe features Nina in a special show on March 15, part of HRC's and 96.3 WRock's monthly "Literock at Hard Rock" series.

Other performers are: Side A band, March 17; International Beatles tribute band Apple, March 23; and Nyoy Volante, March 31.

Regular performers are Zoo (Sundays and Mondays), Fat Session (Tuesdays), Flintstones (Wednesdays), Meyncors (Thursdays), Infinity (Fridays) and Hyperbeat (Saturdays).

Show starts at 9:30 p.m. Call 893-4661 to 64.

March 13

Dale Adriatico at RJTV Bar

Romy Posadas at Merk's Bar Bistro, Greenbelt 3

March 14

RJ with the Mellow Yellow Band at RJTV Bar

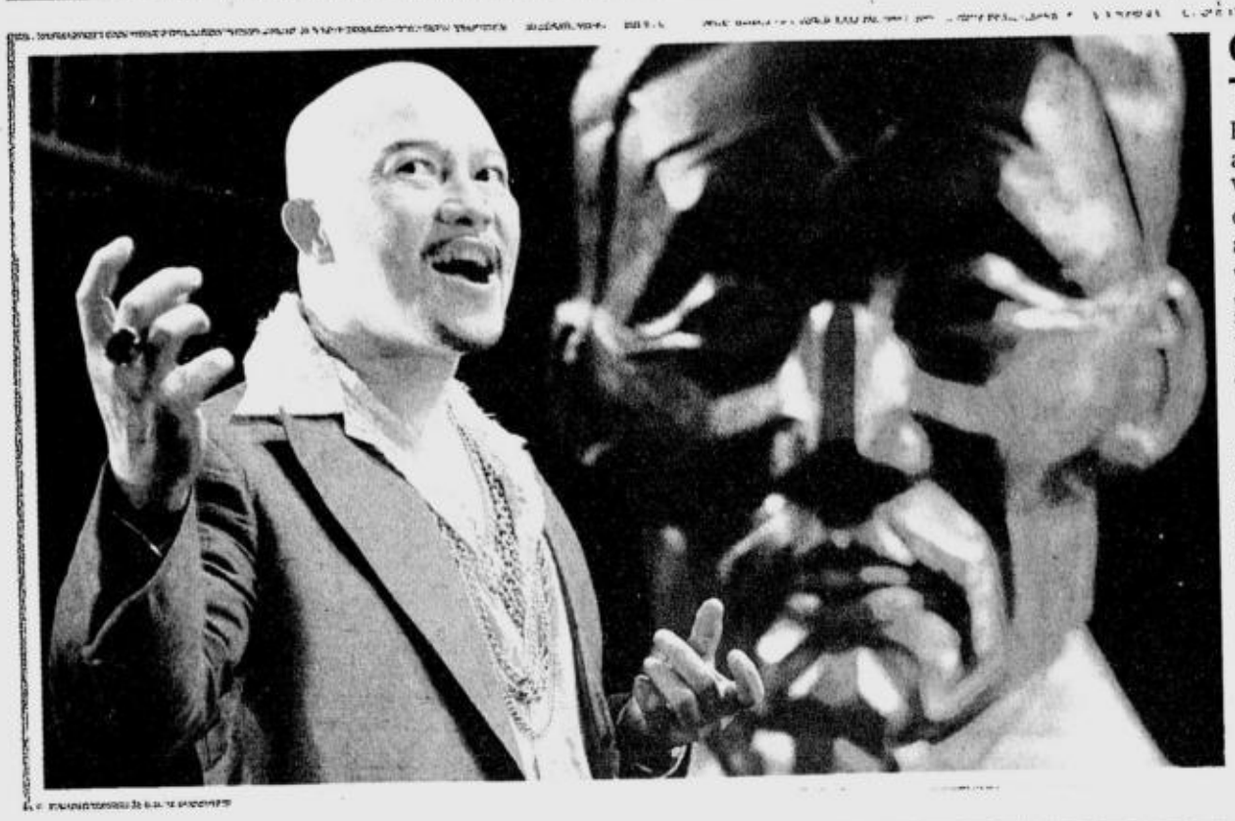
March 15

RJ and Orange and Lemons at Captain's Bar, Mandarin Oriental

Dawn at Merk's Bar Bistro, Greenbelt 3

March 17

Area One at Merk's Bar & Bistro, Greenbelt 3



Once again, The Engineer

FILIPINO SINGER and actor Leo Tavarro Valdez, left, rehearses on March 8 as the cast and crew of the Broadway hit, "Miss Saigon," prepare for their March 17 opening night at Her Majesty's Theatre in Melbourne.

Valdez plays The Engineer, a role he has done over 2,000 times in various international productions in five countries.

In 1995, almost 750,000 people saw the Cameron Mackintosh epic in Sydney's Capitol Theatre during a year-and-a-half run. *AFP*

Willie to bare all on 'Sharon'

TONIGHT, TV HOST WILLIE REVILLAME will answer controversial issues in a tearful one-on-one interview with host Sharon Cuneta on ABS-CBN's "Sharon."

Willie will clarify issues about his rivalry with *Eat Bulaga*'s Tito, Vic and Joey, the Ultra tragedy, his daughter Meryll's separation and estranged wife Liz Almoro.

To talk about Willie are his good friends Randy Santiago, Pooh and composer Lito Camo.

The episode airs after "Rated K."

Meanwhile, on March 15, 9 p.m., ABS-CBN's music channel airs "Myx Presents Lea Salonga."

The award-winning stage and recording artist performs cuts from her latest album, "Inspired" (Sony BMG).

Lea will be accompanied by The Global Studio Orchestra, conducted by her brother, Gerard Salonga. She is currently in Broadway essaying the role of Fantine in "Les Miserables."

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 300 MTRCB R-13 1:40, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30

2 300 MTRCB R-13 1:10, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00

3 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS MTRCB. GP 1:55, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00

4 THE GOOD SHEPHERD MTRCB. R-13 12:05, 3:20, 6:40, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE: FLUSHED AWAY MTRCB GP 11 40 HITCHER MTRCB R-13 7 45, 10 00

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Shangri-La Plaza

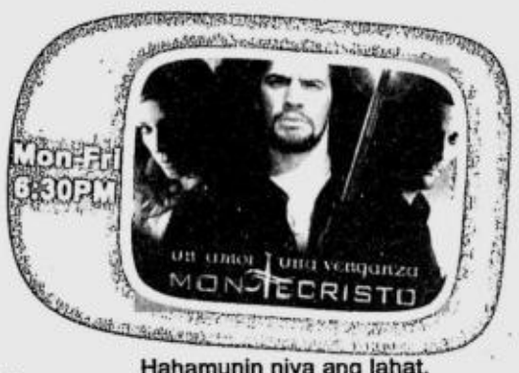
Simple ang ligaya, masarap kasama.

Ang kauna-unahang Fairyserye sa bansa! Buhayin ang imahinasyon sa nalibang kwento ni Pinokio.

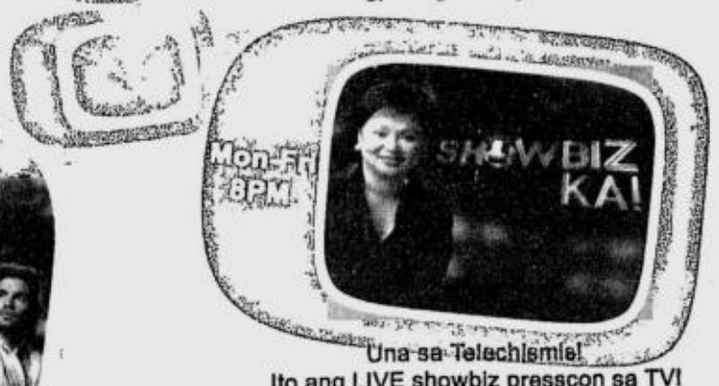
RPN kasama mo

Mga bago at simpleng komedi, chikahan, love story, reality, fairyserye at super series na kukumpleto sa ating masayang samahan.

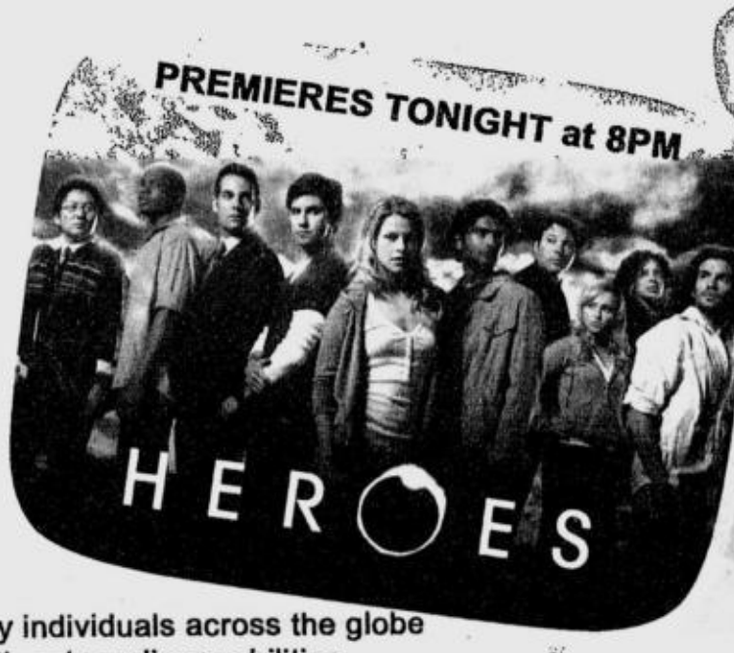
Uulan ng pag-ibig ngayong Summer! Huwag palalagpasin ang romantic Taiwanovela na nagpakilig sa Asya!



Hahamunin niya ang lahat, mabawi lamang ang tunay na minamahal. Ito ang Latinovelang dapat subaybayan.

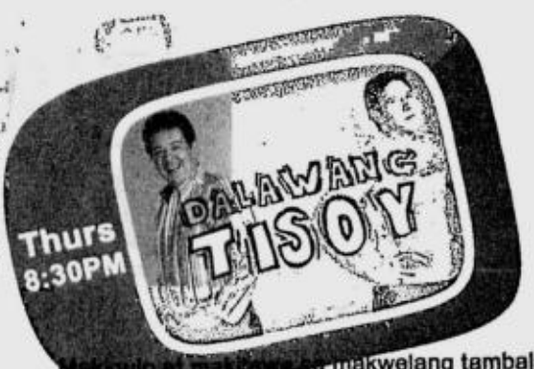


Una sa Telechismis! Ito ang LIVE showbiz presscon sa TV! Hosted by Pat-P Daza-Planas.

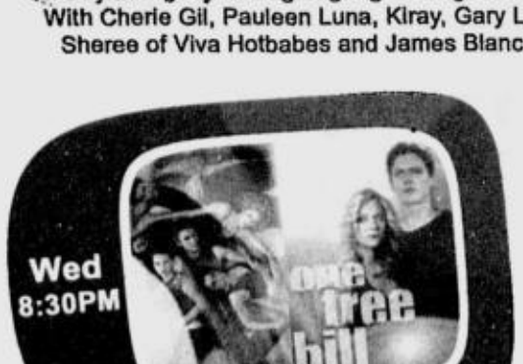


Ordinary individuals across the globe with extraordinary abilities. The super saga is now on Philippine Television.

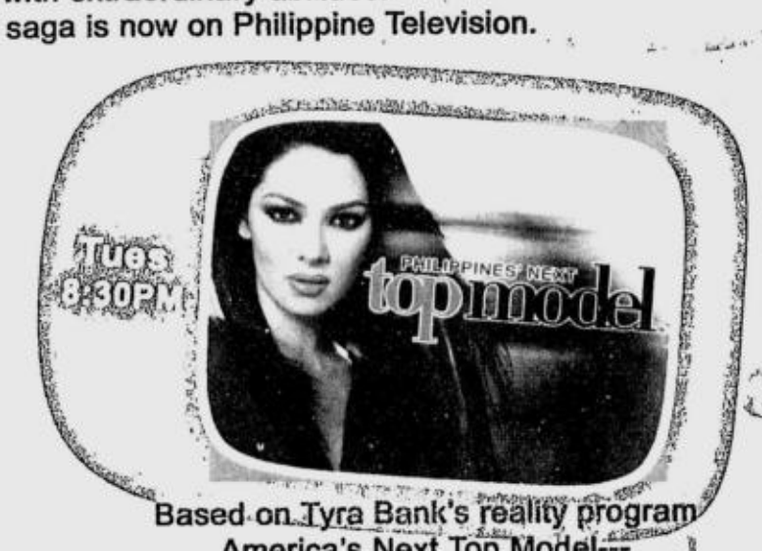
Si Bayani Agbayani ang bagong ilaw ng tahanan! With Cherie Gil, Pauleen Luna, Kiray, Gary Lim, Sheree of Viva Hotbabes and James Blanco.



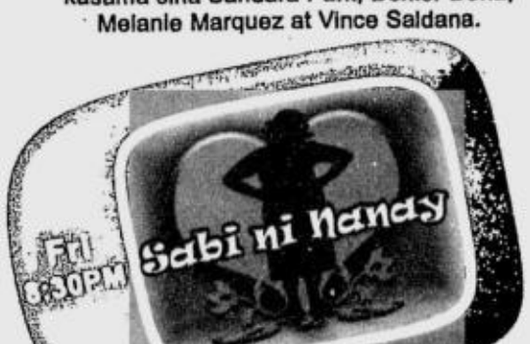
Nakagulo at nakakaaliw na makwelang tambalan nina Eddie Gutierrez at Freddie Webb kasama sina Sandara Park, Dexter Doria, Melanie Marquez at Vince Saldana.



Magkapatid, magkakumpitensya. Subaybayan ang Tagalized version ng Season 1 ng TV hit drama sa US.



Based on Tyra Bank's reality program America's Next Top Model--- 3,000 girls auditioned. Now, meet the 14 candidates. Who among them can exude the top model attitude? Hosted by Ruffa Gutierrez-Bektas.



Ang pinakabago at kauna-unahang Reality Dating Game sa bansa! Sino ang papasa sa hamon ng mystery guy's strict Momma? Hosted by Dennis Padilla.

Sa iba, abala pa lang lugi na. Ngayon, may mas sigurado nang payphone.

PAYPHONE mini

Ipinakikilala, ang bagong PLDT Payphone Mini!

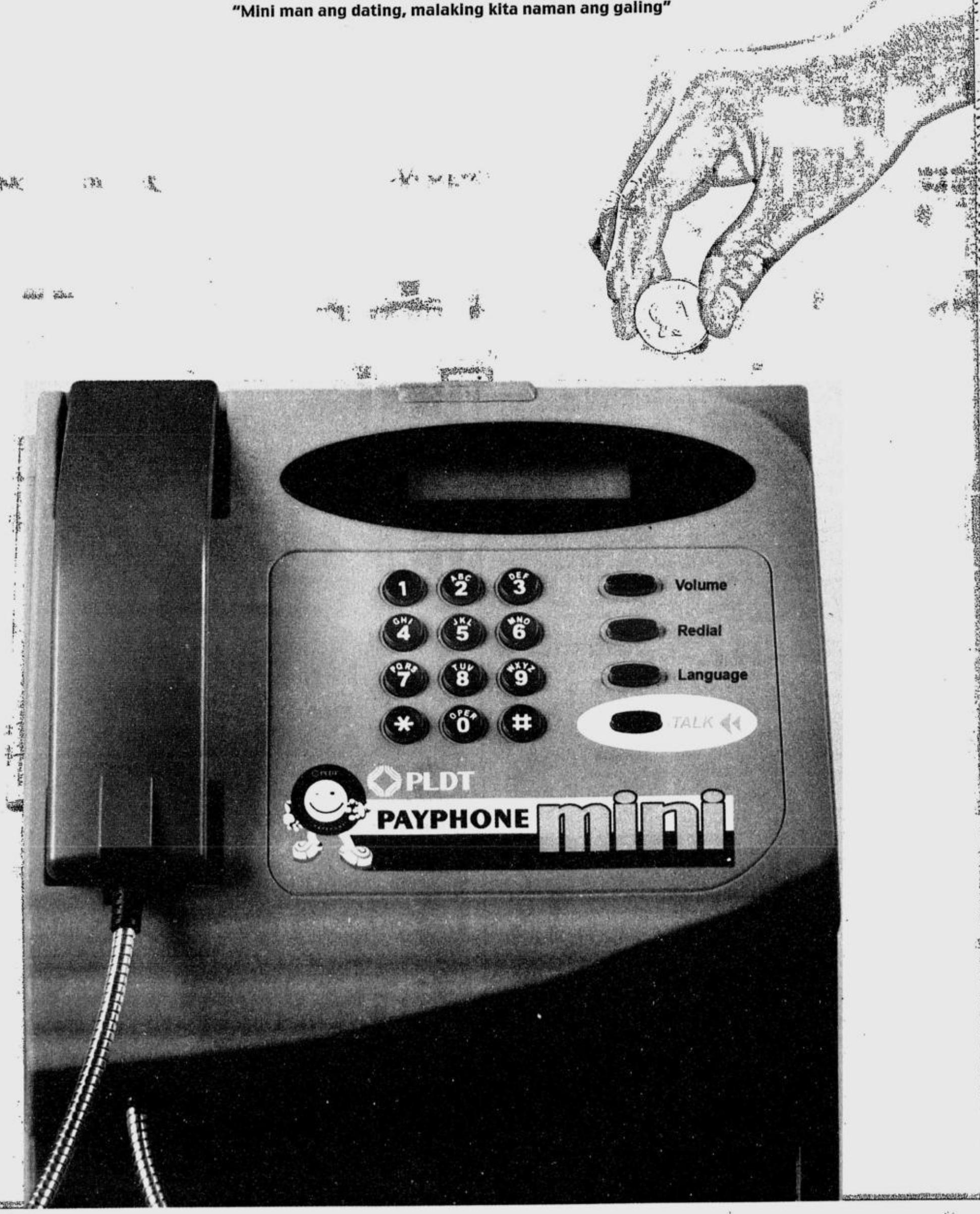
Dito mas sigurado ang kita! Ang puhunan mong P115 maaaring lumago ng P600 kada buwan. Wala pang installation fee. Pwedeng gamitin para sa local, long distance, overseas at cellphone calls. Pwede pang gamitin para sa mga incoming calls! Tamang-tama para sa mga sari-sari store, bus terminal, dorm, carinderia, botika, internet shop, xerox stand at iba pa.

Kaya kung gusto mong umasenso ang payphone business mo, mag PLDT Payphone Mini na.

Para mag-apply, tumawag lang sa 511-2643, 511-2658, 511-2649 at 511-3803 o i-dial ang *777 gamit ang inyong SMART cellphone o dumiretso sa alinmang PLDT Business Office o SMART Wireless Center.

PLDT PAYPHONE mini

"Mini man ang dating, malaking kita naman ang galing"



New love team makes its bid

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

NEW STARS FOR THE NEW FILM YEAR CONtinue to be introduced to viewers: In "Happy Heart," the TV tandem of Rayver Cruz and Shaina Magdayao is finally given a stellar vehicle for the wide screen.

They have to share top billing with Rustom Padilla and Wendell Ramos, but they provide the film's youthful component, so all eyes are on them. Will they click with viewers as local movies' latest hit love team?

We hope they make it, because we've had our eyes on them for years now as potential young stars who have what it takes to be TV-film performers for more than a few trendy seasons.

Shaina started in the biz earlier than Rayver. She first attracted some attention as a child singer—Vina Morales' perky younger sister! That was a good start for the kiddie performer.

In time, however, her *Ate* Vina connection turned out to be a liability, because Shaina wasn't able to shine (no pun intended) on her own. It took her a long time to attract her own kind of attention.

Now that she's a teenager, however, Shaina is in a better position to make her own bid for stardom. She looks good and still sings well, so things are looking up.

We sense, however, that Shaina lacks personal drive and commitment to her career. Her ambition is rather on the soft side, hence the lack of genuine excitement and *brio* in her performances. We hope that she does something about this soonest, so she can make a stronger impact on the big and small screens.

For his part, Rayver Cruz has no problem in the ambition and commitment department. It's clear from his acting and musical performances that he's eager to do his best, he's raring to entertain his audience, and he keeps honing his skills.

As an actor and dancer, Rayver has proven that he's better than most young talents. Beyond individual skills, Rayver's total persona as a performer is captivating because he's brimming with zest and enjoyment. This is no shy, hesitant or clueless talent, that's for sure.

How do Rayver and Shaina come off as a love team? Well, they do pretty much what most teen love teams do, making goo-goo eyes at each other for maximum *kilig* impact on their fans.

In time, we hope that they become more creative and opt for a feistier style. Enough of the standard giggles and whispered sweet nothings, a scrappier William-Maricel projection would be less cloying and definitely more entertaining.

For proof positive of their worth as a love team, we'll have to wait for "Happy Hearts" to start its run soonest. Let's hope the results are as happy as anticipated!

NVC workshops

The New Voice Company will hold its annual summer Theater Workshops from April 10 to May 29. Classes offered: Musical Theater for Teens and Musical Theater for Adults.

Call NVC at 896-6695 or e-mail nvc@pldtsl.net.

The company is also announcing auditions for its 2007 musical, "Into the Woods," with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and book by James Lapine, on March 17 and 18 at the NVC Actors Studio from 2 to 6 p.m. The award-winning musical will be directed by Rito Asilo and will run at Music Museum from Nov. 9 to Dec. 8.

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NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2D
8:30PM Admission Fee- P200/ P250
T-REX IN 3D
11:30AM 1:00PM 2:30PM 7:00PM
Admission Fee- P200
1 PRIMEVAL
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 THE HITCHER
4 DEAD PEOPLE 2
5 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
6 GHOST RIDER
PREMIERE CINEMA
YOU GOT ME
CENTERSTAGE
300
THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
300
CINEMA 2
PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 300
2 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
3 NUMBER 23
4 GHOST RIDER
5 THE HITCHER
6 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
7 DEAD PEOPLE 2
8 YOU GOT ME
9 PRIMEVAL
10 THE PROMISE
11 300
12 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
2 THE HITCHER
3 300
4 300
5 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
6 300
7 PRIMEVAL
8 MUSIC AND LYRICS
9 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
10 YOU GOT ME
11 DEAD PEOPLE 2
12 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 THE PROMISE
4 GHOST RIDER
5 PRIMEVAL
6 THE HITCHER
7 300
8 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
9 YOU GOT ME
10 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
11 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
12 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 300
2 GHOST RIDER
3 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
4 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
5 YOU GOT ME
6 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
7 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
8 DEAD PEOPLE 2
9 THE HITCHER
10 PRIMEVAL

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 300
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
4 THE HITCHER
5 GHOST RIDER
6 YOU GOT ME

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 300
2 THE HITCHER
3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
4 300
5 YOU GOT ME
6 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
7 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
8 GHOST RIDER
9 PRIMEVAL

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 300
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 THE HITCHER

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 300
2 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
3 THE HITCHER
4 GHOST RIDER
5 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
6 300
7 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS
8 PRIMEVAL
9 YOU GOT ME
10 DEAD PEOPLE 2
11 EPIC MOVIE
12 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 300
2 YOU GOT ME
3 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
4 FLUSHED AWAY

SM CITY VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 300
2 FLUSHED AWAY
3 PRIMEVAL
4 YOU GOT ME

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 300
3 YOU GOT ME
4 THE HITCHER

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THE HITCHER
GHOST RIDER
PRIMEVAL
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YOU GOT ME
PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
THE GOOD SHEPHERD

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
300
GHOST RIDER
PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
PRIMEVAL
YOU GOT ME
SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
EPIC MOVIE
FLUSHED AWAY
YOU GOT ME
PRIMEVAL

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
THE FOUNTAIN
GHOST RIDER
YOU GOT ME
PRIMEVAL

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
GHOST RIDER
300
THE PROMISE
FLUSHED AWAY
PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
YOU GOT ME

SM CITY LIPA (043) 756-7925
GHOST RIDER
PRIMEVAL
YOU GOT ME
NUMBER 23

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
YOU GOT ME
MUSIC AND LYRICS
BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
GHOST RIDER

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
YOU GOT ME
IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
THE FOUNTAIN
300

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
THE HITCHER
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PRIMEVAL
IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
YOU GOT ME
300

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
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PRIMEVAL
YOU GOT ME
IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
GHOST RIDER

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
300
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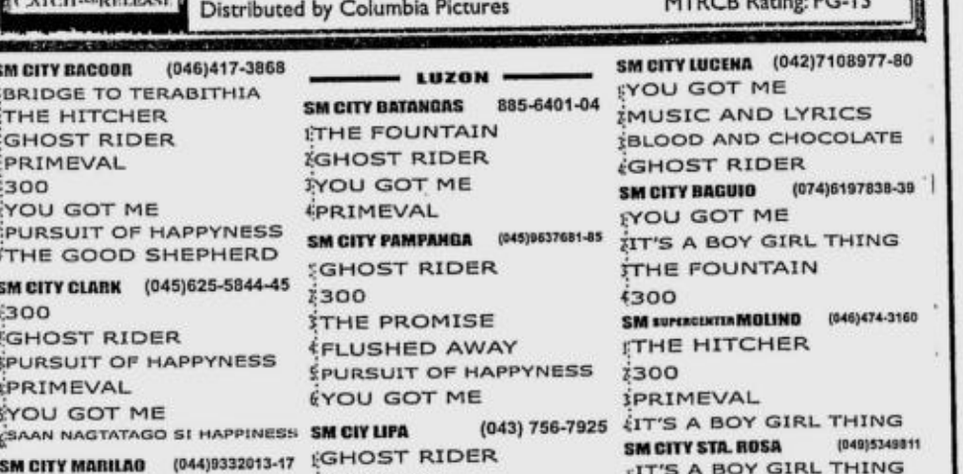
YOU GOT ME
GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
MUSIC AND LYRICS
300
PRIMEVAL
YOU GOT ME
GHOST RIDER
300
RESERVED
FLUSHED AWAY

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
GHOST RIDER
300
THE HITCHER
IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS
YOU GOT ME
PRIMEVAL

SM BACOLOD
NOW OPEN
YOU GOT ME
300
PRIMEVAL
THE MESENGER

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

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JIMMY FABREGAS JERIC RAVAL REZ CORTEZ
CARIDAD SANCHEZ JIMMY SANTOS
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RONNIE LAZARO GARY LISING MATT RANILLO III
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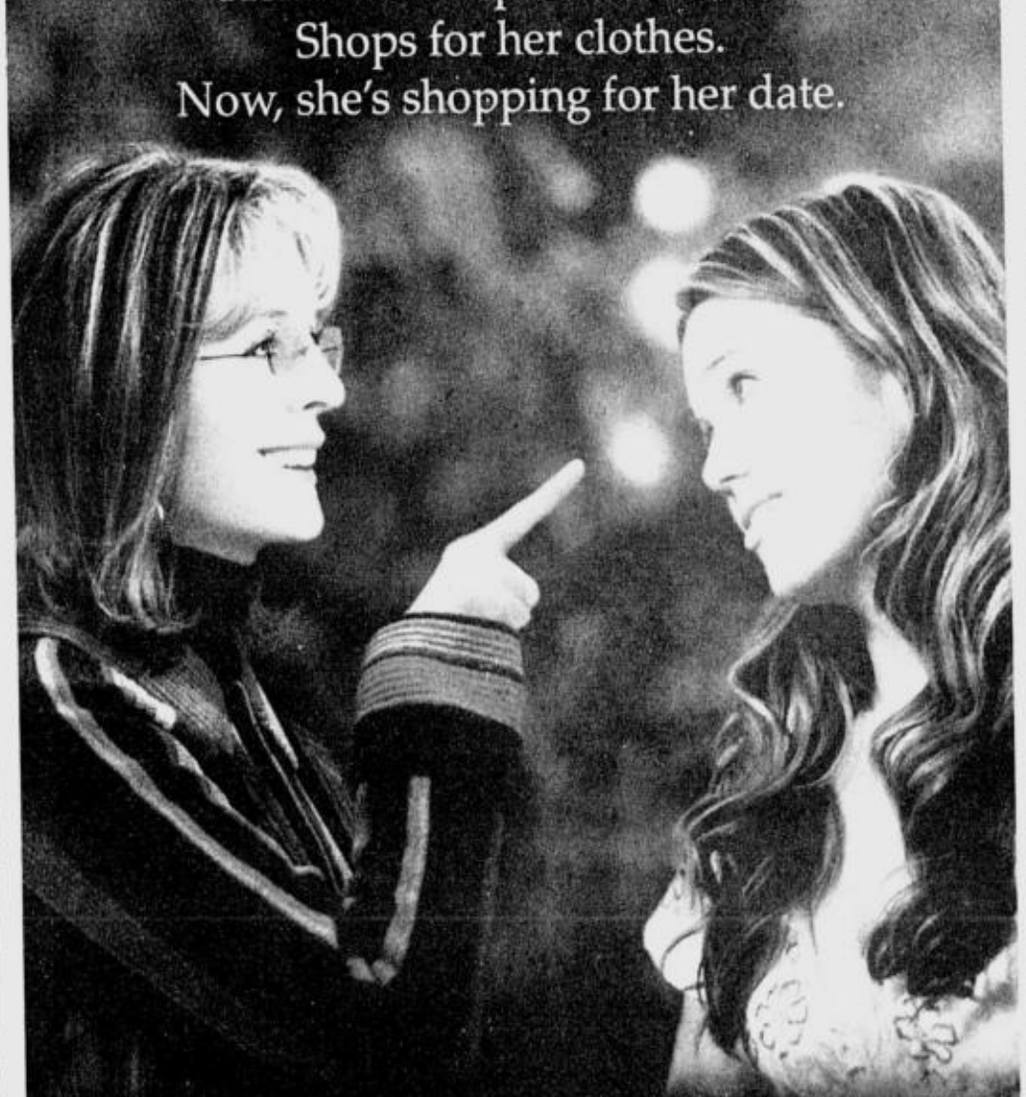
RAMON ZAMORA BOY ALANO PALITO
MELY TAGASA REY SOLO TADO BERTING LABRA
PHILIPP SUPNET JAY AR APUYAN VANESSA MERCADO
BAYANI CASIMIRO JR. RIVA REYES SHALALA
FLORA GASSER RAFRAF SANTIAGO
Written & Directed by:
JUN URBANO
(MISTEYKS OPDA NEYSION ADRES YATA)
OPENS MARCH 21, 2007
ABVENTURES

MTRCB RATING PG-13
Children below 13 yrs. old only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.
DIANE KEATON MANDY MOORE
Her mom shops for her food.
Shops for her clothes.
Now, she's shopping for her date.



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SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 2007

Republika ng Pilipinas
Republic of the Philippines
Kagawaran ng Tanggulang Pambansa
Department of National Defense

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
(DND-Proper Procurement of Goods and Services)

I. The Department of National Defense, through the DND-Proper Bids and Awards Committee, invites suppliers/ manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following projects:

Project A. Various Supplies/Materials and Services: (1st Batch)

Name of Project	Description	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)
Various Supplies and Materials		
1. Drugs and Medicines	Supply and Delivery of Assorted Drugs and Medicines	PhP 3,671,535.00
2. Medical and Laboratory Supplies	Supply and Delivery of Assorted Medical and Laboratory Supplies	191,035.00
3. Dental Supplies	Supply and Delivery of Assorted Dental Supplies	1,012,805.38
4. Other Supplies	Lot 1 - Supply and Delivery of Loyalty Rings/Pins	547,147.74
	Lot 2 - Supply and Delivery of Souvenir Items	1,487,300.00
	Lot 3 - Supply and Delivery of Chinawares with DND logo	700,000.00
5. ICT Spare Parts	Supply and Delivery of Assorted ICT Spare Parts	2,102,125.00
General Services		
6. Pest Control Services	Pest Control Services for OSND Offices for a period of six (6) months	275,000.00
7. Janitorial Services	Janitorial Services for OSND Offices for a period of six (6) months	2,300,000.00
8. Photocopying Services	Photocopying Services for OSND Offices for a period of six (6) months	2,250,000.00
9. Purified Drinking Water	Supply and Delivery of Purified Drinking Water for OSND Offices for a period of six (6) months	300,000.00
10. Refilling of Fire Extinguishers	Supply/Refilling of Fire Extinguishers assigned to OSND Offices	325,000.00
	TOTAL	15,161,948.12

Project B. Various Supplies/Materials and Services: (2nd Batch)

Name of Project	Description	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)
Various Supplies and Materials		
1. Office Supplies	Supply and Delivery of Assorted Office Supplies	PhP 2,105,800.00
2. Computer Supplies	Supply and Delivery of Assorted Computer Supplies	885,613.32
3. Janitorial Supplies	Supply and Delivery of Assorted Janitorial Supplies	725,270.83
4. Subscription Expenses	Lot 1 - Subscription of Foreign Magazines	400,000.00
	Lot 2 - Local Newspapers for a period of six (6) months	500,000.00
5. Construction Supplies	Supply and Delivery of Assorted Construction Supplies	1,161,623.06
6. Aircon Supplies	Supply and Delivery of Aircon Supplies	539,000.00
7. Vehicle Spare Parts	Supply and Delivery of Assorted Vehicle Spare Parts	1,921,932.60
8. Painting, Welding & Upholstery Supplies	Supply and Delivery of Assorted Painting, Welding & Upholstery Supplies	295,620.00
General Services		
9. Repair of Generator Set	Repair of Danyo Generator Set	100,000.00
10. Repair of Motor Vehicles	Repair of Motor Vehicles	1,370,000.00
	TOTAL	PhP 10,004,859.81

II. The schedule of activities are as follows:

ACTIVITIES	VENUE	DATE	TIME
Issuance of Bid Documents	DND Proper BAC Secretariat, OASIL Rm 203 2nd Floor DND Bldg., Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City	Project A: March 12-30, 2007 Project B: March 15 - April 2, 2007	9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Pre-Bid Conference	OASPER Old Conference Room, Basement, DND Bldg	19 March 2007	9:00 AM
Deadline for Submission/ Opening of Bids	OASPER Old Conference Room, Basement, DND Bldg.	Project A: March 30, 2007 Project B: April 2, 2007	9:00 AM
Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. 9184 dated 10 January 2003		
Post-Qualification			
Issuance of Notice of Award			

III. Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable amount as indicated below to the DND-Proper BAC Secretariat, Procurement Branch, Office of Administrative Services, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City, Tel No. 911-8118:

Name of Project	Cost of Bidding Documents
Project A. Various Supplies/Materials and Services: (1st Batch)	
1. Drugs and Medicines	PhP 3,600.00
2. Medical and Laboratory Supplies	500.00
3. Dental Supplies	1,000.00
4. Other Supplies	2,700.00
5. ICT Spare Parts	2,100.00
6. Pest Control Services	500.00
7. Janitorial Services	2,300.00
8. Photocopying Services	2,200.00
9. Purified Drinking Water	500.00
10. Refilling of Fire Extinguishers	500.00
Project B. Various Supplies/Materials and Services: (2nd Batch)	
1. Office Supplies	2,100.00
2. Computer Supplies	1,000.00
3. Janitorial Supplies	700.00
4. Subscription Expenses	900.00
5. Construction Supplies	1,100.00
6. Aircon Supplies	500.00
7. Vehicle Spare Parts	1,900.00
8. Painting, Welding & Upholstery Supplies	500.00
9. Repair of Generator Set	500.00
10. Repair of Motor Vehicles	1,300.00

IV. The eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted. All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part-A (IRR-A).

V. All prospective bidders are encouraged to apply for a certificate of eligibility not later than two (2) days prior to the scheduled submission and opening of bids.

VI. The OSND assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

VII. The OSND reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any formality and award the Contract to the bidder whose proposal is the most advantageous to the government as evaluated by the DND-Proper Bids and Awards Committee (DND-Proper BAC).

VIII. The Invitation is also posted in the DBM Procurement Service website at www.procurement service. org., and the DND website at www.dnd.gov.ph, in accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184. Further, it shall also be posted at conspicuous places in the premises of the Department of National Defense (DND).

ASSISTANT SECRETARY RUBEN F CIRON
Chairman, DND-Proper BAC

(PDI – March 11, 2007)

BE A SERVICE STATION DEALER OF THE COUNTRY'S LEADING OIL COMPANY

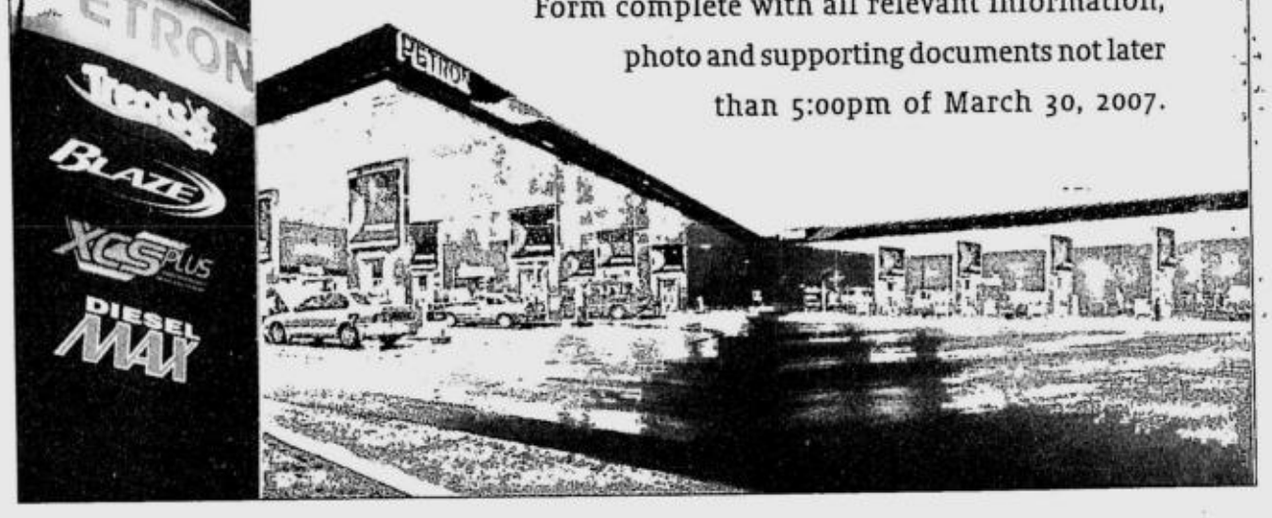
Locations	Required Cash Capital
- Laguna Bel-Air, Sta. Rosa, Laguna	P6.0M
- Evangelista St., cor. Arguelles St., Makati City	P6.5M
- Canlalay, Biñan, Laguna	P5.0M
- Pastor Ave., Bo. Cuta, Batangas City	P5.0M
- Solano, Nueva Vizcaya	P5.0M
- Sgt. Rivera cor. Matumtum St., Quezon City	P5.0M
- V. Luna Road, Masikap St., Quezon City	P6.0M
- San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte	P8.0M

Note: Above capital requirement will be used for actual station operation. No up-front money is given to Petron. Only applicants who can meet the following "MUSTS" criteria need apply:

* Must be able to put up the required capitalization
* Must be able to operate and run the station on full time basis
* Must not be an existing dealer of any other oil company

Preference shall be given to applicants residing near the station being applied for. Previous applicants need not apply.

Please secure your application form from Luzon Reseller, Petron Corporation, Jesus Street, Pandacan Manila. For details, kindly get in touch with Ms. Rosette P. Sanchez at 563-8521 loc. 282. Submit the original copy of the duly accomplished Dealership Application Form complete with all relevant information, photo and supporting documents not later than 5:00pm of March 30, 2007.



Philippine Amusement & Gaming Corporation
A Global Corporation with a Global Mindset and a Filipino Heart

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

ITB NO.: 02-05-2007

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) is inviting all interested bidders in its forthcoming public bidding for the project stated hereunder:

Name of Project	: Supply and Delivery of Thirty Four (34) units high-end PTZ Cameras
Technical Specifications	: ¼" CCD, Color Dome Camera, NTSC Format, 470 TVL High Resolution or better, Maximum black and white illumination of 0.05 lux and minimum illumination of 0.01 lux for picture. Variable Focal (4-88mm) or better, 22X Optical Zoom and 8X Digital Zoom or better, Auto Iris, Auto/ Manual Shutter Speed, Variable Speed Pan/Tilt, 360 degrees Continous Rotation, Programmable Presets, AGC & BLC, Ceiling Mount Enclosure, Tinted Gold Dome (Lower) 7" or lower, Adaptable 220 VAC/60HZ Input Power. Indoor Type *** Must be compatible with the existing PACOM 2030 system
Approved Budget	: Three Million Two Hundred Thirty Thousand Pesos (Php 3,230,000.00)
Source of Fund	: Internally Funded

Only suppliers duly registered with PAGCOR shall be allowed to participate in the bidding. Unregistered suppliers must register at the Suppliers Registration & Evaluation Section (SRES), Procurement & Property Department (PPD), 2nd Floor PAGCOR House, 1330 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila., Tel. No. 526-0573.

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/ Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 7, 2007 - March 30, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	March 20, 2007 (2pm)
3. Submission of Bids	April 2, 2007 (2 pm)
4. Opening of Bids	April 2, 2007 (2 pm onwards)

Bid documents will be available to prospective bidders at the BAC Secretariat Office, 2nd Flr. PAGCOR House, 1330 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila upon payment of a non-refundable bidding fee of ***One Thousand Six Hundred Fifteen Pesos (Php 1,615.00)***. In order to secure the documents, bidders should present the Official Receipt issued by our Cashier to the BAC Secretariat.

PAGCOR assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

PAGCOR reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Please address all communications to the BAC Secretariat Unit, Procurement & Property Department.

(Sgd.) RENE C. FIGUEROA
Chairperson, BAC 2
(PDI – Mar. 11, 2007))

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

The General Public is hereby formally notified that all **SPECIAL POWERS OF ATTORNEY, MEMORANDA OF AGREEMENTS, CONTRACTS OF WHATEVER NATURE OR KIND, FORMS OF AGREEMENT** regarding the **MAYSILO ESTATE** properties of **LILIA D. SEVILLA** emanating from OCTs 982, 983, 984, 985, 994, and likewise, her **KRUS NA LIGAS** properties are all hereby **REVOKED, CANCELLED, VOIDED** and **ANNULLED** and of **NO EFFECT WHATSOEVER** for all legal intents and purposes.

Any and all transactions or agreements purportedly executed by any person or persons in connection with the above-mentioned properties shall not be honored or validated by the owner except those made directly with **LILIA D. SEVILLA** or her true and lawful **Attorney In-Fact, CYNTHIA S. CO.**

Inquiries regarding the said properties maybe made thru Tel. No. 436-1749 during waking hours except Sat. and Sun.

(Sgd.) LILIA D. SEVILLA

(PDI – March 11, 2007)

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• Electronics and Communications Engineer (ECE) preferably with license
• Medical Technologist for Professional Sales
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INDUSTRIAL TARPAULIN TENT W/ METAL TUBE ASSEMBLY
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Closing: Thursday, 22nd March 2007 - 18:00 CCT (Local Time)
Location: Laguna, Philippines
Viewing Days: Strictly by Appointment
For more information please contact Dadas Serna
Tel: +63 (2) 854-4917~19 Loc. 110 Fax: +63 (2) 831-9507
Email: dadas.serna@henrybutcher.com
GoIndustry Henry Butcher | HENRY BUTCHER INTERNATIONAL PHILS INC. Rm 102 Jolliland Bldg., 670 Edsa, Pasay City Tel No.: 854 4917-19 Fax No : 831 9507

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  - Reading Comprehension & Vocabulary Dev't
  - Call Center English
  - Conversational English
  - Creative, Journalistic writing
  - Business English
- With formal teaching experience

ACADEMIC TUTORS
- Graduates or students or teachers of UP, Ateneo, La Salle
- Can teach English, Math, or Science
- Have good rapport with young people

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
- Graduate of Mass Comm, English, Law, Management, Business Admin, or MBA students
- With relevant writing/editing experience
- Perfect English Skills

MARKETING ASSISTANT
- Graduate of Marketing, Advertising, or any business-related course
- With excellent communication and organizational skills

TRAINING /ACADEMIC COORDINATOR
- Graduate of Business Administration, Management, Psychology, or any business-related course.
- Service-oriented
- Excellent communication and organizational skills

LECTURERS
(FOR COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAM REVIEW)
- Honor graduates or teachers of UP, Ateneo, and La Salle; or Bar or board topnotchers, or law or medicine graduates and students with outstanding scholastic records
- Will lecture on Math or Science or Language, Reading, or General Information
- Have good rapport with young people

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS
- Can teach any of the ff:
  - Chinese, Japanese, Korean
  - French, Spanish, Italian,
  - German, Arabic, others
- With teaching experience

MANAGERS /MANAGEMENT TRAINEE
- Graduate of Education, Business Administration, Management, Psychology, Marketing or any business-related course
- With at least 1-2 years supervisory experience in business mangement
- Has strong customer service background

ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT
- Accounting graduate
- 2-3 years experience
- Honest and trustworthy
- Flexible, can do multi-tasking
- Willing to extend long hours as needed

AHEAD TUTORIAL & REVIEW CENTERS

MAIN: FBR Building, 317 Katipunan Avenue, Loyola Heights, Quezon City • **GREENHILLS:** Providence Building, 55 Annapolis Street • **ROBINSONS GALLERIA:** Park Avenue (near Equitable Bank), Ortigas Center • **MANILA:** J. Abad Santos near Padre Algue, Manila • **ALABANG:** Prime Center, Prime cor Enterprise Sts., Madrigal Business Park, Alabang • **DAGUPAN:** De Venecia Road, Lucao District

WANTED:

FLOOR DIRECTOR
TALENT COORDINATOR
PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS
WRITERS
ROAD MANAGER

REQUIREMENTS:
1. Graduate of Mass Communication or related course from a reputable school
2. Not over 30 years old
3. With or without experience
4. Male / Female

Please submit or hand-carry your resumé at the address below:

Television and Production Exponent Inc. (TAPE Inc.)
79 Xavierville Subd., Xavierville Ave.,
Loyola Heights QC

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Philippines MCPO Box 2102 Tel. No. 893-6001/1320

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) and has completed within the last ten (10) years at least three (3) similar contracts to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

Supply, Fabrication, Delivery and Installation of one (1) permanent Pipe Bridge over Canlas River at Mindanao Geothermal Production Field (MGP 07-010)

The Approved Budget is PhP5,428,624.82 chargeable against PNOC-EDC funds. The contract duration is **Forty-Five (45) Calendar Days.**

Application Forms for Eligibility and Bid documents may be secured from either of the following:
1) PNOC-EDC Davao Logistics Office, No. 20 Airport Road, Sasa, Davao City (c/o F.V. Lopez) or
2) PNOC-EDC MGPF Admin, Barangay Ilomavis, Kidapawan Cuty (c/o G.G. Macaraeg)

starting **March 12, 2007** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: Five Hundred (P500.00).

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **March 22, 2007, 9:00 AM** at PNOC-EDC Davao Logistics Office, No. 20 Airport Road, Sasa, Davao City. Site Inspection will be conducted the following day on **March 23, 2007.**

Application for Eligibility and Sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC MGPF Logistics Section, Ilomavis, Kidapawan City, not later than **2:00 P.M. (Warehouse Wall Clock Time) of April 4, 2007** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to abort the bidding process, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

(Sgd.) AL REY R. CENIZA
FBAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI – Mar. 11, 2007)

IMMEDIATELY NEEDED

FEMALE SECRETARIES

SINGLE, COLLEGE GRADUATE AND NOT OVER 30 YEARS OLD WITH PLEASING PERSONALITY AND **GOOD ORAL/WRITTEN ENGLISH**
MUST BE PROFICIENT IN OFFICE COMPUTER APPLICATIONS.
APPLICANTS PLEASE CALL
CRIZADEL BERMUDEZ AT 8125527
FOR INTERVIEW APPOINTMENTS
2:00 - 5:00 PM, MONDAY to FRIDAY

ASIATRUST
ACQUIRED ASSETS UNIT

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Tel. Nos.: 924-5738, 924-5772 or 0917-4730557

Look for: Mel Ferrer or Abby Email: **ecferrer@asiatrustbank.com**

- 4-stry Townhouse Unit located @ Lot 222-D No. 651 Jose Abad Santos., Brgy. Littile Baguio, San Juan, Metro Manila with total lot area of 62.12 sq.m. floor area 187.50 sq.m. with selling price of P6M
- Vacant Lot located @ Amore Ville Subd., Saluysoy Drive, Brgy. De Ocampo, Trece Martirez City with total lot area of 147,203 sq.m. with selling price of P65M
- Vacant Industrial Lot located @ Lot 17 Blk. 1 New York corner Boston, Meycauayan, Bulacan with total lot area of 3,335 sq.m. with selling price of P14M.
- 2-stry Ofc Warehouse Bldg. located at 9th St., Between 9th and 10th Ave., Grace Park, Caloocan City LA = 487.50 sq.m. FA = 820 sq.m. Selling Price = @ P12.0M
- Highly commercialized vacant lot located near St. Joseph Jollibee, Residenza Subd., Pag-Ibig City, lot area = 4,341 sq.m. @ P7,000 per sq.m.
- Office Condominium Unit with 2 parking slots located @ Unit 1403, 139 Corporate Center, 139 Valero St., Makati City with total floor area of 190 sq.m. with selling price of P 12,850,000.00
- Residential Condo located @ Unit 9-A Phase 2 Green Valley Village, Green Valley Road, Baguio City witht total floor area of 100.25 sq.m. with selling price of P2.1M

ALL PRICES ARE STILL NEGOTIABLE W/ EASY INSTALLMENT TERMS, LOW DOWN PAYMENT @ 20%

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Republika ng Pilipinas
PAMBANSANG PANGASIWAAN NG PATUBIG
(National Irrigation Administration)
Bancasi, Butuan City

INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION

Date: February 26, 2007
Loan No. 1668-PH: Southern Philippines Irrigation Sector Project
Contract No. SPISP-LCB-GLB-03
(Local Competitive Bidding)

1. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of Southern Philippines Irrigation Sector Project (SPISP) and intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of this loan to eligible payments under the contract for which this invitation for Prequalification is issued.
2. The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) intends to pre qualify firms for the Construction of Gibong Left Bank Main Canal Extension and Appurtenant Structures based on the above mentioned contract package. The scope of contract is as follows:

Work Item	Estimated Quantity
a. Clearing and Grubbing, sq.m.	46,000
b. Canal Excavation, cu.m.	80,000
c. Canal Embankment Fill, cu.m.	20,000
d. Concrete Works with RSB, cu.m.	193

3. It is expected that notices of prequalification will be made on March, 2007.
4. Interested eligible applicants may obtain further information from the NIA-Region 13 CARAGA and inspect the Prequalification Document at the address given below during workdays from 0800 hours to 1700 hours Philippine Standard Time
5. The prequalification forms, in English language, may be purchased by an interested applicant upon submission of Letter of Intent clearly stating "Application for Prequalification for Contract No: SPISP-LCB-GLB-03 and payment of a non-refundable fee of Php 2,500.00 per contract package not later than 1700 hours, Philippine Time March 22, 2007. The Letter of Intent shall be addressed as follows:

The Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee
c/o ENGR. MEDEL P. MAWILE
Brgy. Bancasi, Butuan City, Philippines
Tel. No. 085-342-3000
Facsimile No. 085-342-5353

6. Submission of Application for Prequalification, consisting of one (1) original and three (3) copies must be received in sealed envelopes either delivered by hand or by registered mail to the above address on or before April 2, 2007, 1700 hours Philippine Standard Time. The envelopes must be clearly marked "Application for the Prequalification for Contract No SPISP-LCB-GLB-03.
7. The NIA, reserves the right to accept or reject late applications.
8. The NIA will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by Applicants in connection with the preparation or delivery of their Applications.
9. The NIA will notify all Applicants in writing the results of evaluation of their applications for prequalification.

(Sgd.) **MEDEL P. MAWILE**
BAC Chairman

Noted:

(Sgd.) **DEMOCRATICO P. GRANA, JR., CESO V**
Regional Manager

(PDI – Mar. 4 & 11, 2007)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

MARWIN BAGON

Notice is hereby given to the Public that the above person whose picture appears above was terminated from employment by the **ACCUPOINT SYSTEMS, INC.** effective February 7, 2007.

His case for **QUALIFIED THEFT** is now pending before the Manila City Prosecutor's Office and docketed as I.S. No. 07A-01071.

Any transaction entered into by this person on or after the said date shall not be honored by the company.

(PDI – Mar. 11, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
BICOL UNIVERSITY
Legazpi City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

As per authority granted by the Office of the President, Malacañang dated December 22, 2006, the Bicol University, Legazpi City, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites supplier/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project

Name of Project: Supply and Delivery of One (1) unit Brand New School Bus
Approved Budget for the Contract: Six Million Pesos (Php6,000,000.00)
Delivery Period: Ninety (90) days upon receipt of Purchase Order (PO)

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1 Issuance of Bid Documents	March 11, to 17, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	March 19, 2007, 9:00 AM, BUGASS Conference Room, BU Main Campus, Legazpi City
3 Submission and Opening of Bids	March 31, 2007, 9:00 AM, BUGASS Conference Room, BU Main Campus, Legazpi City
4. Bid Evaluation	March 31, 2007
5. Post-qualification	April 2, 2007
6 Notice of Award	April 3, 2007

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Six Thousand Pesos Only (6,000.00) to the Cashier's Office Bicol University General Administration, in accordance with the revised fees of the BAC.

The Bicol University assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved:

(Sgd.) DR. LUIS O. AMANO
BAC Chairman

(PDI – Mar. 11, 1007)

John Clements Consultants, Inc.

Renewal of License with DOLE

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

LICENSE FOR PRIVATE RECRUITMENT AND PLACEMENT AGENCY

PRPA LICENSE NO. M-07-02-007 ☐ New ☑ Renewal

This license to recruit, process and deploy landbased workers is hereby granted to

JCCI CONTRACTORS, INC.
2/F RCI Bldg., 105 Rada Street
Legaspi Village, Makati City

pursuant to the Labor Code and Omnibus Rules Implementing the Code.

This license shall be valid in the Philippines for the period 09 January 2007 to 08 January 2009 unless sooner revoked, cancelled or suspended for violation of the Labor Code and related issuances. Transfer or use by any other person or entity tenders this license null and void.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Official Seal of National Capital Region, Department of Labor and Employment, to be affixed at the City of Manila, Philippines, this 10th day of January 2007.

(Sgd.) LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(Renewal of this license is thirty (30) days before expiration date)

Check out more jobs from JobMarket Compact every Wednesday

Inquire about the JobMarket package at 897-8808 loc 514.

Inquirer Compact available in all key cities in Luzon.

JOB Market COMPACT

JOB Market

NFA-FDC offers seminar on Predictive Microbiology

THE FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER of the National Food Authority invites interested parties to a seminar-workshop entitled Predictive Microbiology as Applied to Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Plan Development, Shelf Life Testing and Microbial Risk Assessment to be held on February 28 to March 2 from 8:30 AM to 4 PM at the FDC Compound, FTI Complex, Tagig City.

The course fee is P6,550 per participant inclusive of a seminar manual, lunches, snacks and a shuttle bus service from Ayala Center, Makati to FDC and back.

Checks must be made payable to the Food Development Center, National Food Authority.

Participants may opt to stay at the FDC dormitory with air-conditioned rooms that can accommodate 2 persons per room. Adjoining rooms share a toilet and bath with hot shower. Room charge is P790 per room per day for double occupancy and P600 per room per day for single occupancy.

For more information, please contact Ms. Amelia Bautista of the FDC-NFA at telephone numbers 838-4014, 838-4561, 838-4478 and fax number 838-4017 and 838-4692.

NFA awards second batch of rice imports

THE PHILIPPINES WILL GET THE bulk of rice imports this year from Vietnam. The National Food Authority has given the notice of awards to four winning bidders to source from Vietnam a total of 415,000 metric tons of long grain white rice of 25 percent brokens.

The NFA held a bidding on Feb. 28 for the importation of 580,000 MT of rice. The rice importation, the second batch to be undertaken this year, consists of 30,000 MT of 15 percent brokens and 550,000 MT of 25 percent brokens.

Thailand will be the source of the 30,000 MT of 15 percent brokens 125,000 MT of 25 percent brokens. The balance of 10,000 MT, 25 percent brokens will come from Pakistan.

Vietnam Southern Food Corporation (VINAFOOD) won the right to supply a total of 296,500 metric tons of 25 percent brokens at US $324.98 per metric tons CFR, FO.

Vietnam is also the major source of the initial 500,000 MT of rice the NFA imported in January this year. Thailand and Pakistan supplied 20,000 MT and 6,000 MT respectively of the initial rice imports.

The NFA has already bidded out 1.18 million metric tons of rice in the January and February biddings.

This is part of the total 1.6 million metric tons the Philippines is set to import this year.

For more information on the story, the public may send their inquiries via Text NFA program through mobile number 0917-6210927.

THE RUSSIAN DOMRA

Quartette Phoenix of Russia, one of the participants of Cuerdas sa Panaghiusa, display the Domra and Domra-viola. The Domra is a long-necked Russian string instrument with three or four steel strings and a round resonator. It is played with a plectrum, and is often used as the melody lead in Russian balalaika ensembles. Cuerdas sa Panaghiusa: 2nd international Rondalla Festival took place in Dumaguete City from Feb. 19-25.

DOLE starts working on guidelines for nursing exam retake

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT SECRETARY ARTURO D. BRION HAS RE-submitted to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo a draft Executive Order that will officially direct the Labor Department to administer the special voluntary examination for the passers of June 2006 nursing board exam.

This came after the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) flatly rejected the last ditch effort of a congressional team to appeal its earlier decision requiring the retake of Tests 3 and 5 of the June 2006 board examinees wanting to work in the US.

The CGFNS requires the retake and the passing of the equivalent of Tests 3 and 5 to become eligible for the grant of the VisaScreen certificate.

Brion said that while he already submitted the draft EO to Malacanang, he expects that the President would wait for the report on the outcome of the mission of the team of Rep. Monico Puentevella before she acts on the draft E.O.

Based on the draft EO, the Chief Executive is giving the DOLE the authority to administer the special voluntary examination that shall be offered together with the June 2007 and December 2007 Board of Nursing Examination.

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L-BAHAY 9206784 4540520

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

COMML/RESDL

6DOOR 1STY APT NEW 200m² FA 640m² LA CORNER LOT BATANGAS CITY 09275349653

•Proj6 #58Road3 Comil/Resdl• 9219967/0255; 09178865431

HOUSE & LOT

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2STY MAYWOOD 272SQM 8522528 09165671194

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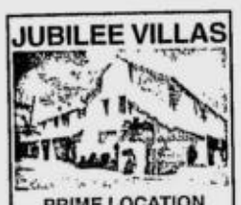

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FACTORY/WHSE

Whse 500m²-2.2has Sale/Rent Mla anywhere 09189014661

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HOUSE

P15 3BR 2TB 09178030658

CONDO/TWNHSE

2-3BR UNITS FOR RENT G.A. TOWER NR MRT BONI CALL US @ 747-8002/3928

2br Wackwk 15T 09189420180

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NEW TOWNHOUSE TAGAYTAY OVERLOOKING 8138420 8133568

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OFC SPACE MAKATI 461SQ 4 PARKING 8133568 8138420

OFC SPACE MAKATI 430SQ 3 PARKING 8133568 8138420

HOUSE & LOT

Alabang San Jose Vill Infront of Ayala Twn Cntr 5BR 3TB Big Backyard & Garage 571-0255 0915-7865434

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'02 TOYOTA ALTIS 1.6G SILVER ENDING 3 WELL-MAINTAINED W/ RECORDS CALL 09178480712

'03 CRV MT P650T 1ST Owner Al CASA W/TV SPOILER SIDE STEP BOARD 09178132723;6872406

93 Corona Exsaloon 2.0 auto orig paint seats rush T7237711 / 09188317794

94 BENZ S600L v12 P1.150M Fully Tax Paid 0922-3859733

ABAMARIE RENT A VAN 8255704 09212445702

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2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

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RUSH SALE Mobile DJ sound System 09192608588

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B'LIARD TBLE 38T-UP 8014494

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PUBLIC NOTICES

ANNOUNCEMENT

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Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late ROSITA Y. ASONG consisting of real property was extrajudicially settled and distributed among her heirs ABRAHAM B. ASONG and CYNTHIA Y. ASONG by means of public document executed on Feb. 26, 2007, and ratified before Atty. JOSE CARLOS TANINGCO, Notary Public in and for Makati City, as per Doc. No. 372, Page No. 76, Book III, series of 2007, of his Notarial Register. (Mar. 4,11&18, 2007)

LEGAL NOTICE

Affidavit of Loss exec by Dr. RAMON P. PATERNO on 03/07 /07 for PCA Cert. #1247 of 05 /17/79 before Notary Public Francisco P. Taala of QC as Doc 163 Page 34 Book 165 Series of 2007. (PDI-Mar. 11, 18 & 25, 2007)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late AURORA DIZON CAÑIZARES & FERNANDO L. CAÑIZARES were extrajudicially settled among their heirs before notary public Atty. Candice B. Manalo as per Doc#454 Page#91 Book#03 Series of 2007. (PDI-Mar. 4,11 & 18, 2007)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE ESTATE OF THE LATE MA. LOIDA SARINAS LAPIÑA HAS BEEN EXTRA JUDICIALLY SETTLED BY HER HEIR AS PER DOC#142;PAGE#29;BOOK#XVIII; SERIES OF 2007 BEFORE NOTARY PUBLIC ATTY. LEONARDO G. MEDINA OF BACOOR CAVITE. (PDI-FEB. 25, MAR. 4&11, 2007)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of NOBERTO B BLANCO was extrajudicially settled by his heirs per Doc No. 23; Page No. 4 Book No. III Series of 2007 Before Notary Public Dulcisimo Hinanay Jr. PDI-Mar 11, 18 & 25, 2007

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late CONSTANCIO T. MAGNO has been extrajudicially settled among his heirs as per Doc No. 472, Page No. 95, Book No. 102, Series of 2006 before Notary Public Atty. Jose L Sta. Ana of Marikina City. (PDI-March 4, 11 & 18, 2007)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late ELIZABETH T. FAMINI was self-adjudicated among her heirs as per Doc#482 Page#97 Book#LXIX Series of 2007 of Notary Public Franklin G. Abadilla of Marikina City. (PDI - Feb. 25 Mar. 4, & 11 2007)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE ESTATE OF LATE LOLITA D. JAYPE HAS BEEN EXTRAJUDICIALLY SETTLED BY HER HEIRS AS PER DOC#058;PAGE#13;BOOK#28; SERIES OF 2007 BEFORE NOTARY PUBLIC ATTY. DANILO BAÑARES OF MAKATI CITY. (MAR. 4,11&18, 2007)

NOTICE OF LOSS

APM Cert. Nos. 23438, 15439, 15501, 17744, Cert. Nos. 139099, 78986, 79461, PET Cert. No. 2794 issued to MDR SEC. INC. has been lost. If no contest is received, new certificates will be issued. (PDI-March 4, 11 & 18, 2007)

I-CARD of JIN YOUNG LEE was lost Last Feb. 26,2007 If found Pls Call at Tel# 895-88-56 ; 8952827

MERALCO-A CERTIFICATE NO. 142121A-200 SHARES; NO. 222755A -100 SHARES UNDER THE NAME OF KATHRYN C. CHUA WERE DECLARED LOST, IF NO CONTEST IS RECEIVED W/ IN 1YR NEW CERTIFICATES WILL BE ISSUED. (PDI- Feb. 25 Mar. 4 & 11, 2007)

MERALCO-A CERTIFICATE NO. 142212A - 200 SHARES; NO. 222833A -100 SHARES UNDER THE NAME OF CHUA SIO LON WERE DECLARED LOST, IF NO CONTEST IS RECEIVED W/ IN 1YR NEW CERTIFICATES WILL BE ISSUED. (PDI- Feb. 25 Mar. 4 & 11, 2007)

Notice is given on the lost of Camp John Hay Certificate No. 00135 with 1 share. If no contest received new certificate will be issued. (PDI-Mar. 11, 18 & 25, 2007)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that IONICS, INC. Stock Cert.#43825 with 10,000 shares issued to OSCAR U. ONG was lost. If no contest is received, new certificate will be issued. (PDI - March 11, 2007)

Notice is hereby given that Loyola Plans Consolidated Inc. O.R. Nos. 11121000032981-90; 32991-3000; 33001-010; 32841-50; 32924-20; 40425-430 was declared lost & invalid by EDNA G. DE PEDRO. If found, pls. Call 635-0109/6279531 (PDI-Mar. 11, 18 & 25, 2007)

Notice is hereby given that the Manila Southwoods Golf Club Stock Cert# B-0984 issued to PETER J. DOREY was lost.If no contest is received, new certificate will be issued. (PDI-Feb. 25,Mar.4& 11,2007

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Republic of the Philippines
MUNICIPALITY OF VICTORIA
Province of Northern Samar
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date: March 11, 2007
ADB Loan No.: 1772-PHI
Contract No.: SP-08-009-01

1. The Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of the INFRASTRUCTURE FOR RURAL PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT SECTOR (InfRES) PROJECT and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the Contract for **Rehabilitation/ Improvement of 12.34 kilometers Victoria Farm to Market Road, Package 1.** Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries of the Asian Development Bank that:
   (a) are registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board to undertake infrastructure projects as Medium A contractor or better, and
   (b) have undertaken within the past 5 years, as the contractor, management contractor or subcontractor, (3) roads construction work projects valued at least Nineteen Million Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P19,500,000.00) each
2. The LGU-Victoria invites sealed bids from bidders with the above qualifications for the construction and completion of the Works for the Rehabilitation/Improvement of 12.34 kilometers Victoria Farm to Market Road Package 1, which includes Earthworks (Excavation and embankment); Road Gravelling; and Construction/Installation of RCBC and RCPC. The Contract Period is about Twelve months (360 calendar days).
3. Bidders may obtain further information from, and inspect and acquire the bidding documents, at BAC Secretariat LGU-Victoria, Victoria Northern Samar.
4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders on submission of a written application to the above office, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **EIGHT THOUSAND PESOS (P8,000.00).**
5. All Bids must be accompanied by a Security of 2% of the total bid price in the form of Cash, Manager's Check or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency, and must be delivered to LGU-VICTORIA, VICTORIA , N. SAMAR. The schedule of bid activities are as follows:

Activity	Date	Time	Venue
Issuance of Bid Documents	March 5 to April 10, 2007	8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M	BAC Secretariat, LGU-Victoria, N. Samar
Bid Preparation Period	March 12 to April 10, 2007		
Pre-Bid Conference	March 30, 2007	9:00 A.M.	Municipal Session Hall, Victoria, N. Samar
Deadline for Submission of Bids	April 11, 2007	9:59 A.M.	Municipal Session Hall, Victoria, N. Samar
Bid Opening	April 11, 2007	10:00 A.M.	Municipal Session Hall, Victoria, N. Samar

6. The LGU reserves the right to accept or reject any bids and to cancel the bidding process at any time prior to award of the contractor, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligations to inform the affected bidders of the reasons for Employer's action.
7. For further inquiries you can call cell no. 09065840767

(Sgd.) MARTHA E. CADANO
Chairperson,
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – Mar. 11, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
MUNICIPALITY OF VICTORIA
Province of Northern Samar
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date: March 11, 2007
ADB Loan No.: 1772-PHI
Contract No.: SP-08-009-02

1. The Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of the INFRASTRUCTURE FOR RURAL PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT SECTOR (InfRES) PROJECT and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the Contract for **Rehabilitation/ Improvement of 7.42 kilometers Victoria Farm to Market Road, Package 2.** Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries of the Asian Development Bank that:
   (a) are registered with Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board to undertake infrastructure projects as Medium A contractor or better, and
   (b) have undertaken within the past 5 years, as the contractor, management contractor or subcontractor, (3) roads construction work projects valued at least Nine Million Pesos (P9,000,000.00) each.
2. The LGU-Victoria invites sealed bids from bidders with the above qualifications for the construction and completion of the Works for the Rehabilitation/Improvement of 7.42 kilometers Victoria Farm to Market Road Package 2, which includes Earthworks (Excavation and embankment); Road Gravelling; and Construction/Installation of RCBC and RCPC. The Contract Period is about eight (8) months (240 calendar days).
3. Bidders may obtain further information from, and inspect and acquire the bidding documents, at BAC Secretariat LGU-Victoria, Victoria Northern Samar.
4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders on submission of a written application to the above office, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **EIGHT THOUSAND PESOS (P8,000.00)**
5. All Bids must be accompanied by a Security of 2% of the total bid price in the form of Cash, Manager's Check or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency, and must be delivered to LGU-VICTORIA, VICTORIA , N. SAMAR The schedule of bid activities are as follows:

Activity	Date	Time	Venue
Issuance of Bid Documents	March 12 to April 16, 2007	8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M	BAC Secretariat LGU-Victoria, N. Samar
Bid Preparation Period	March 19 to April 16, 2007		
Pre-Bid Conference	April 3, 2007	9:00 A.M.	Municipal Session Hall, Victoria, N. Samar
Deadline for Submission of Bids	April 17, 2007	9:59 A.M.	Municipal Session Hall, Victoria, N. Samar
Bid Opening	April 17, 2007	10:00 A.M.	Municipal Session Hall, Victoria, N. Samar

6. The LGU reserves the right to accept or reject any bids and to cancel the bidding process at any time prior to award of the contractor, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligations to inform the affected bidders of the reasons for Employer's action.
7. For further inquiries you can call cell no. 09065840767

(Sgd.) MARTHA E. CADANO
Chairperson,
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – Mar. 11, 2007)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

The public is hereby informed that **MR. MARION GINO N. GO** is no longer connected with ENAV Logistics Management Services, Inc.

Any transaction entered into or made through him for the company shall not be honored.

(PDI - March 11, 2007)

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"For he grants sleep to those he loves."
Psalm 127:2

RENATO MATEO CRUZ

of Baliuag, Bulacan
16 April 1930 – 8 March 2007

His bereaved family, *wife*, **Lety** ; *children*, **Tito** and **Lucy**, **Baby** and **Tito**, **Nick** and **Lisa**, **Rose** and **Ed**, **Maris**, **Nato** and **Edith**, **Talin**, **Fati** and **Caloy**, and **Daffy**; *grandchildren*, **Cheska**, **Tam** and **Kay**, **Santi** and **Sophie**, **Katie** and **Nicholas**, **Monina**, and **Carlos**; *sisters*, **Cita**, **Nena** and **Lita**; brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the family residence in Baliuag, Bulacan. A celebration of the Holy Eucharist will be held Sunday, March 11 at 11:30 A.M at the St. Augustine Church, Baliuag, Bulacan. Cremation will follow at 4:00 P.M. at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina.

On Monday afternoon, March 12, the cremated remains will be brought to the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Shrine, Broadway, New Manila, Quezon City. A Necrological Service will be held on Tuesday, March 13 at 4:00 P.M. at the main church.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

BENITO TIU LIM

Died : February 2, 2007 (Vancouver, Canada)
Buried : February 17, 2007 (Christ the King, Metro Manila)

thank our relatives, friends and associates who sent flowers, mass cards and messages of sympathy and joined us in our time of sorrow.

His beloved wife, **Christina**; his children **Xylina** & **Wilson**, **Yancy** & **Zacchary**; and grandchild **Jenna** give thanks to the Lord for the blessings in his life.

DEATH NOTICE

HELEN MANAOIS ULANDAY
Passed away in Houston, Texas, on February 26, 2007 at the age of 84.

Her cremains will arrive in Manila on March 15 and will be brought to Arlington Chapel B, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City, for necrological services on March 16 and March 17. Interment is scheduled on March 18 at 3 p.m.

HILARIO BOQUIREN PIDLAOAN
of Malasigui, Pangasinan
Peacefully joined his Creator on March 9, 2007 at the age of 69.

His remains lie in state at the St. Ignatius Cathedral Moratorium, Camp Aguinaldo. Interment will be announced later.

Message of Thanks

We, Daddy's "gentle warriors," are at a loss for words to convey our gratitude for the compassion and kindness you have manifested for our earthly loss but heavenly bliss expressed through a spoken or unspoken word, a smile, a handshake, a warm embrace, a presence, flowers and most specially the masses and prayers.

Yes, you and us will never see, hear or feel Daddy's loving presence but his memory will remain real in our hearts for he has touched our lives the way God willed it.

To you we say, THANK YOU, MARAMING SALAMAT PO, DIOS MABALOS, MATAMANG SALAMAT KANINDONG TANAN!

The Family of the late
DIOKNO DEL ROSARIO MANLAVI
Historian and Writer
of Cuyo, Palawan
December 26, 1921 – February 22, 2007

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."
John 3:16

In Memoriam

CHONA STA. ROMANA-NARCISO

12 March 1953 – 25 February 1988

Her son **Victor**; sister and brothers **Neni** and **Elfren**, **Chito** and **Nancy**, **Nelin**; nieces and nephews **Tanya**, **Roel**, **Aina**, **Norman**, **Christopher**, and all those dear to **Chona** request your continuing prayers for truth, justice and peace.

Chona will be fondly remembered at the 6:00 am and 6:30 pm celebrations of the Holy Mass tomorrow at the Jesus the Divine Healer Parish, Tahanan Village, Parañaque.

Your support of the **Ma. Corazon Lucero Sta. Romana Commemorative Scholarship** administered by the St. Scholastica Research and Development Foundation will be most appreciated.

MESSAGE OF THANKS

We, the family of the late

ENGR. EMMANUEL QUIROZ TOPACIO

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord on February 21, 2007

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy and who, in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

ST. PETER CHAPELS AT 50
A milestone achievement as St. Peter Chapels opens its 50th chapel! The pioneer in establishing the largest memorial chapel network in the country, they are acknowledged as the DeathCare Experts. Nearly an industry itself, St. Peter Chapels aims to expand its network to deliver affordable and superior quality memorial services. The official servicing mortuary of St. Peter Life Plan Inc., collectively services thousands of families a month all over the Philippines – an assurance of reliability, experience and expertise.

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

People, Events & Products

Review for realty licensure exam set

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INdustry has set another licensure examination for those aspiring to be licensed real estate brokers on May 27. With the prospect of another real estate boom as in the pre-1997 period, it is expected that many would be eyeing to position themselves as real estate professionals. In this regard, Urban Institute of Real Estate announces four schedules of its Comprehensive Real Estate Seminars (CRES) and review in Makati and Quezon City:

Monday afternoon session will be on March 26, April 16, 23, 30, May 7 and 21, from 1:15 to 6:45 p.m. at Max's Restaurant, Glorietta 2, Makati; while Tuesday evening session will be on March 27, April 10, 17, 24, May 1, 8 and 22, from 6 to 10 p.m. at Max's Restaurant, Glorietta 2, Makati. The Saturday afternoon session will be at the same time and venue and will be held on March 24, April 14, 21, 28, May 5 and 12, while the Thursday afternoon session will be held at Max's Restaurant at Gateway Mall, Araneta Center, Cubao, Quezon City on March 29, April 12, 19, 26, May 3 and 10, same time slot.

Experts and authorities in their respective fields led by land laws specialist lawyer Dennis Tablizo and engineer Enrico S. Cruz, 1st and 8th placer in the real estate appraisers and brokers board examination respectively, are lined up to lecture on the subjects officially prescribed by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Urban also announced that updated copies of "Comprehensive Notes and Reviewer For Real Estate Broker's Examination" prepared by Cruz and lawyer Rex Enrico V. Cruz III are now available for distribution to aspiring examinees who will be taking the real estate brokers board examination.

Designed to support prospective examinees, the over 280-page reviewer contains all the board exam topics, with more than 200 past board questions and answers sorted according to board subject required by DTI. This reviewer will also be a handy reference for real estate developers, practitioners and property owners.

For other details or advance registration, Urban Institute may be reached at 681-0928 or at 0916-4269174 or by e-mail at urbanet@pacific.net.ph.

DOT readies 2nd tourism jobs fair

RESPONDING FAVORABLY TO THE labor sector's demand, the Department of Tourism (DOT) is staging the 2nd Tourism Jobs Fair (TJF) on March 28 to 29 at the Cebu International Convention Center.

DOT Secretary Joseph Ace H. Durano said TJF 2007 would virtually institutionalize this first and only industry-specific jobs fair into a regular annual event as sought by the labor, corporate and education sectors.

"We are staging the 2nd TJF to accommodate both graduates of tourism-related courses and the whole graduate population of March 2007 from any related field, those who are presently employed but are seeking career changes, and those who are presently unemployed or underemployed," Durano said.

TJF, according to Durano, is designed to support President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's 10-point agenda, which includes the creation of six to 10 million jobs as a government priority.

"We hope to gather some 200 employers/exhibitors and 5,000 visitor-applicants, create matches between them, and generate on-the-spot employment during the event's two-day run," Durano pointed out.

TJF 2007 is expected to create awareness on the impact of tourism on local and international employment, enable applicants and suppliers to assess each other's needs and capabilities, provide a wide range of choices for both under one roof, and establish a running database on tourism's labor force and employment opportunities.

More information on TJF 2007 can be obtained from www.tourismjobs.ph.

Supported by ABS-CBN Regional Network Group, TJF 2007 will also have forums on how the education sector can adapt its curriculums to the actual job requirements of industries and thus hasten the employment of new graduates.

The TJF is virtually ushering in the tourism industry's year-round job creation, hiring, and training as part of the DOT's TourismJOBs (Jobs, Opportunities, Businesses) program, which comes on the heels of the phenomenal increase in foreign arrivals over the past three years - from 2.29 million in 2004 to 2.62 million in 2005 and 2.84 million in 2006.

This unprecedented tourism boom requires the industry to expand its capacity and manpower capability in order to meet the surge of foreign arrivals and the emerging requirements of the global outbound market.

The DOT is now putting up a system that will enable applicants to file their job applications either onsite (in Cebu) or online via the Internet.

"This innovative system will bring about a better compilation of statistical data. For example, we will have an automatically updatable online list of tourism employees and employers, filled and unfilled positions, skills required, percentage of prequalified and shortlisted applicants, percentage of applicants still being processed for hiring, and breakdown of jobs available as categorized by skills and areas of business operations, among others," Durano said.

3rd MIAS drives to grandest car spectacle

Start your engines now and prepare for the most amazing wheels thrills as Worldbex Services International (WSI) takes you to the most celebrated international automobile experience in the 3rd Manila International Autoshow, slated from March 29 to April 1 at the World Trade Center, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City. Be the first to enjoy the latest models and accessories, significant concepts and extraordinary ways to pimp your ride as this year's biggest and only international-quality motor show in the country embarks on the theme "Modern Mobility" for all psyched car buyers and enthusiasts. Showcasing the latest fad in the world of automotive madness in more than 14,000 square-meters of space solely for motor delights, the 3rd Manila International Autoshow vows to once again put into the spotlight its one-of-a-kind plethora of automotive brilliance in the country. The big event will also feature a far-reaching 5,000-square meters of exhibition hall showing off aftermarket parts and accessories attuned to the popularity of customized rides, motorcycle and truck displays. The 3rd Manila International Autoshow will also be the most rewarding event to date as the Car Awards Group (Cagi), the only scientific and unbiased award-giving body composed of over 40 media personalities from 25 various media outfits, spearheads the unveiling of the 2007 Car of the Year. For more details, call Worldbex Services International at 531-6374 and 531-6350 or log on to www.worldbex.com.

St. Luke's gastric cancer conference set March 19 and 20

THE DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY, IN COOPERATION WITH ST. Luke's College of Medicine William H. Quasha Memorial, will be conducting a Gastric Cancer Conference on March 19 and 20 at the 2nd floor conference room of the main hospital. Internationally renowned gastric surgeons Dr. Sasako of Japan and Dr. Yang of Korea will lead a panel of resource speakers who will tackle a wide range of interesting topics like the management of gastro-esophageal junction tumors, gastrectomy complications and management, and pain management of gastric carcinoma, among others. Local experts will also provide inputs about a host of equally important topics. For more information, call the St. Luke's department of surgery at 727-5545 or 723-0101 local 5545 or 4402.

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Recruitment Specialists
Recruitment Associates
Sourcing Coordinator
Sourcing Associates
(Makati)

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Sourcing Officer
Sourcing Coordinator
Recruitment Officer
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For U-Belt applicants, we accept walk-ins Mondays to Sundays, 10am to 7pm.
For information on how to apply, text CVG HELP to 2308 Globe/Touch Mobile or to 2951 Smart/AMP/Talk & Text.

Attend the job fair at Convergys Ortigas on March 16, 8pm to 12midnight or March 17, 6am to 8am
Free Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf products for all applicants.

RECRUITMENT SITES

Alabang Office
Block 44, Northgate Cyberzone, Muntinlupa City
(02)758-1688

Cebu Office
R. Arcenas St., Arcenas Estate Banawa Hills, Cebu City
(032)416- 5810

Commonwealth Office
2/F Dilliman Commercial Center, #46 Don Mariano Marcos Avenue, Dilliman, Quezon City
(02)756-7088

Makati Office
Convergys One, 6796 Ayala Ave., cor Salcedo St. Legaspi Village, Makati City
(02)756-7188

Ortigas Office
24th Floor, Robinsons Equitable Tower, #4 ADB Avenue Ortigas Center, Pasig City
(02)857-7678

U-Belt Office
Level 1, St. Thomas Square 1150 España Boulevard cor. Padre Campa St. Sampaloc, Manila
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He/she will be responsible in the planning, implementation and monitoring of established work plan of the computerized system audit. Perform information systems audit covering system development, processing and operations, application and maintenance. Ensure that administrative and application controls are built into the system to ensure the integrity of management data and adherence to company policies and procedures.
- Graduate of any business related courses, preferably Accountancy
- Has at least 3 years Information Systems Audit Experience or with background in audit applications systems.
- Has extensive computer training
- Proficient in oral and written communications

GENERAL SERVICES DIRECTOR
Knowledgeable in building administration, general services and has background in managing a maintenance service provider.
- Qualified Applicants should be male, 30-45 years old;
- Conversant in the use of English language in both oral and written form;
- Computer literate

SCHOOL DIRECTORS
Responsible in the overall management of assigned campus, which involves marketing for new students; building administration and; branch management.
- College graduate
- MA/MBA graduates from reputable schools is an advantage but not required.
- Must have at least 3-5 years of Managerial/ Marketing with sales experience.
- With excellent communication skills.
- Willing to be assigned to any of our branches as well in the Visayas and Mindanao areas.

IT PERSONNEL
- Graduate BS Computer Science, Computer Engineering or any related courses
- With at least 6 months related work experience
- Knowledge in Visual Basic and SQL will be an advantage for those aiming to apply for supervisory/managerial level
- Knowledgeable in both software and hardware applications

SysDev Managers / Programmers (Senior and Junior)
- Graduate of a System Development / Computer Programming course from a highly reputable school..
- With at least 6 months actual system development / programming experience
- Must have knowledge of MS SQL, ASP programming, Java and Web / Portal development.
- Highly adaptable and independent
- For those aiming for the Managerial positions, minimum six months major project management experience is a must.
- Graphic design experience will be a plus

System Support Personnel
- Graduate BS Computer Science, Computer Engineering or any related courses
- Can create systems documentation and user manuals
- Can resolve issues and support users via phone or email
- Knowledgeable in both software and hardware applications
- Actual programming experience is a definite plus

Sales/Account Executives
- Graduate of any business related courses having a minimum of 2 years Sales and Marketing experience preferably in the printing industry
- Possesses pleasant personality; Computer literate and; has
- Excellent communication skills in both English and Tagalog languages

HR SUPERVISORS
- Graduate of Human Resources Management, AB/BS Psychology or any related field
- Has at least 5 years solid HR experience
- Male/Female not more than 30 years old
- Has good command of the English and Tagalog languages in both oral and written form

INTERNAL AUDITOR / AUDIT SUPERVISORS
- BS Accountancy Graduate
- Has 6 months related work experience
- Supervisory experience in Auditing is a must for Audit Supervisor applicants
- Preferably Certified Public Accountant (CPA)
- Willing to travel

ACCOUNTING OFFICERS
- BS Accountancy graduate
- At least 2 years experience in general accounting
- Computer literate, proficient in oral and written communication, can work under pressure.
- Fresh graduates are welcome to apply

REGISTRARS
- Business, Psychology, Education or Information Technology Management Graduate
- At least 3 years experience in the servicing and maintenance of student record/ supervisory experience

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- Minimum of 5 years experience in teaching and 2 years Administrative or Managerial experience

College of Arts and Sciences
- PhD from reputable School
- With Noteworthy publications.
- Minimum of 5 years experience in teaching and 2 years Administrative or Managerial experience

College of Business Administration
- DBA or MBA preferably CPA.
- With noteworthy publications.
- Minimum of 5 years experience in teaching and 2 years Administrative or Managerial experience

College of Computer Studies
- MS Computer Science / Information Technology graduate from reputable School
- With noteworthy publications.
- Minimum of 5 years experience in teaching and 2 years Administrative or Managerial experience

College of Engineering
- MS in Engineering graduate from reputable school
- With Noteworthy publications.
- Minimum of 5 years experience in teaching and 2 years Administrative or Managerial experience

FACULTY

College of Arts and Sciences
College of Business Administration
College of Computer Science
College of Computer Engineering
- Graduate of AB/BS Psychology, Computer Engineering, Information Technology, Computer Science, Information Management, ECE, Accountancy, English, Marine Transportation, or Social Sciences, Tourism, Hotel and Restaurant Management
- With good Scholastic records
- Teaching/mentoring experience is an advantage.
- Related license is necessary for Accountancy and ECE Faculty position applicants
- Preferably graduate of any related Masters/ PhD degrees or has at least 18 MA/MS units
- 5 years practice in the area of specialization is an advantage

English Language Officer/ Part-time Chinese-English Teacher
- At least 1 year experience as an English Teacher.
- Chinese language proficient oral and written.
- Preferably with MA Degree, TESL or relevant language education.

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- With a Degree in BSMT
- A Master's Degree holder
- Holder of a management level certificate *(PRC Certificate of Registration)* with at least 24 months sea-going experience as Captain, Chief Mate or Second Engineer
- With at least two years of relevant teaching & institutional management experience
- Must have completed the following training courses : IMO Model 6.09 and IMO Model Course 3.12

DEAN FOR COLLEGE OF MARINE ENGINEERING
- With a Degree in BSMARE
- A Master's Degree holder
- Holder of a management level certificate (at least a Second Engineer Officer), PRC Certificate of Registration (COR) with at least 12 months sea-going experience as Second Engineer
- With at least two years of relevant teaching & institutional management experience
- Must have completed the following training courses : IMO Model 6.09, and IMO Model Course 3.12

DEAN FOR COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
- Master's degree holder in Engineering *(Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Computer, Industrial and Electronics-Communication)*
- With at least two years of relevant teaching & institutional management experience

INSTRUCTORS FOR ENGINE SIMULATOR COURSE
- With a Degree in BSMT or BSMARE
- Must be holder of Certificate of Instructor's course IMO Model Course 6.09 and IMO Model Course 3.12
- Holder of a management level certificate (PRC Certificate of Registration) with at least 24 months sea-going experience as a Second Engineer

INSTRUCTORS FOR WELDING COURSE
- With relevant experience as welders and attuned to modern technologies in welding practices
- TESDA & Phil. Welding Research Development Society Certified

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- With a degree in BSN with license
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- Preferably with master's degree or at least with MA units

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Sanciangko St., Cebu City ✆ (032) 255-7777 loc. 155 / 147

HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL
Vivre debout

Handicap International is a French international non-government organisation working on behalf of persons with disability in over 60 countries worldwide. The organisation is a co-winner of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize.

is currently seeking the following:

Community Nutritionist (For Davao Project)

The community nutritionist will report directly to the medical coordinator and will be based in Davao. S/he will be responsible for counseling individuals and groups on nutritional practices designed to prevent/ manage diabetes and promote good health. S/he will evaluate individual needs, develop nutritional care plans, and instruct individuals and their families. S/he will support the development of protocols/tools for the care education/nutrition of diabetics, technical support to the community health workers and assistance to diabetic patients at the community level to organise themselves and develop their own activities.

Community Educator (For Davao Project)

The community educator will report directly to the medical coordinator and will be based in Davao. S/he will provide technical assistance on health promotion and community mobilization. S/he will be responsible for the development of protocols/tools for raising awareness on diabetes at the community level to organise themselves and develop their own activities.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY NUTRITIONIST AND EDUCATOR
- Bachelor's Degree in nutrition, health sciences, education or related fields
- Two years of community organising experience, preferably in chronic disease projects
- Demonstrated ability to work in multi-cultural settings
- Experience in and ability to work with a variety/all levels of community partners
- Posseses leadership skills and is a team player
- Strong computer and communications skills
- English and Visayan written and verbal proficiency a must

Program Support for Institutional & Public Relations (For Manila Office)

Under the overall supervision of the Program Director, the main responsibility is to shape and oversee an ambitious external affairs and public relations campaign to develop broader and deeper financial support for the program. In addition, the candidate will provide creative and strategic leadership to the organization's public relations efforts including media outreach and relations, special events management, and services as liaison with high-level, high-profile supporters on behalf of the organization.

QUALIFICATIONS
- Relevant Graduate degree (or equivalent work experience)
- Minimum of 10 years' diverse national not-for profit experience that includes development, strategic marketing and communications, public relations, and public affairs; 5 years of this experience must be at a senior level, experience in a network or membership organization a plus
- Creative, analytic and strategic thinker interested in leading and doing
- Demonstrated ability to shape and run a successful public relations and external outreach program
- Must be an assertive self-starter and eager to move projects through to completion; able to work under pressure and handle multiple projects at the same time
- Able to work with and motivate volunteers and staff; strong team builder
- Superb communications and computer skills

Please send your Curriculum Vitae to:
mla-ofc@handicapinternational.ph
Not later than March 19, 2007

To learn more about Handicap International, please visit **www.handicapinternational.ph**

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Executive Assistant
HR Assistant
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- Qualifications: college graduate, good communication, organization and computer skills, 21-35 years old

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Qualifications:
- *Graduate of a 4-year course with good scholastic records*
- *Sales driven, able and willing to do field work*
- *With pleasing personality and good moral character*
- *Experience in consumer sales / banking is an advantage*
- *Not more than 35 years old*

Please send your resumé with a recent 2x2 photo to
Diamedix Technologies, Inc.
Unit 207, ITC Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City
or call 8961512 / 8960588 and look for May King or Louie Luntok
or email us at hr@diamedix.com.ph

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Yogo is short for Young Global Professional. And ICT is Yogo central. Nowhere else. ICT is a global company with offices in key business centers, Makati, Ortigas and Marikina, servicing both multinational and local clients.

Here, the only formula for success is to have passion to make it big while young. If that is the sort of vibe that gets your groove going, maybe you too can be a Yogo.

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Outbound Sales Agents
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or come see us:

Ortigas
14th Floor Union Bank Plaza, Ortigas Center, Pasig City

Makati
18th Floor Tower 2, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City

Marikina
Ground Floor ICT Bldg 1, Riverbanks Centre, Marikina

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For walk-in applicants, please bring your SSS number, TIN number and NBI clearance.

WANTED: PEOPLE TO GROW

How did our small company grow to become the biggest full-service CRM agency in the Philippines? By growing our own people. Founded in 1988, BCD Pinpoint has grown through the years by looking for people who wanted to learn and grow, and who wanted to keep learning and growing. We pioneered the art and science of direct marketing in the country and we are recognized not just in the Philippines, but around the world, for the quality of our creative work and our passion for delivering measurable results to our clients.

Now we're looking for a few more people to grow. So if you're willing to combine work with learning, an open mind with an attention to detail, a sense of pride in work with a sense of responsibility to look after our clients' business, then we hope you'll join us.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE:

Junior Copywriter

No experience necessary, but excellent written English skills essential. College graduate (we actually prefer people who graduated from management or business courses, but would like to develop their creative skills). Some published articles, even in school publications or internal newsletters, would be an advantage.

To apply: *Please send a cover letter, along with your resumé, telling us why you think you would do well in our company. If you have samples of work that have been printed or published, please enclose copies along with your application.*

Art Director

No experience necessary, but must have working knowledge of Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop, or Macromedia Freehand and Flash. College graduate.

To apply: *Please send your resumé, along with 3 copies of your best work, and an explanation on why you think the work is your best.*

Senior Account Manager

Preferably with at least 1 year experience in client service or project management. College graduate, preferably from business or management courses. Excellent presentation skills; proven leadership potential an advantage

To apply: *Please send a cover letter, along with your resumé, telling us why you think you would do well in our company.*

Database Programmer

Working knowledge of PHP, MySQL. No experience necessary.

To apply: *Please send a cover letter, along with your resumé.*

Please e-mail your applications no later than March 16, 2007 to:
apply@bcdpinpoint.com

BCD•PINPOINT

4/F Bloomingdale Building, 205 Salcedo Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City, Philippines 0731

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A School in Antipolo is in need of:

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ASSISTANT BRANCH MANAGER

Store Operations
- Responsible for the overall operations of a department/s to ensure attainment of optimum sales performance and excellent customer service.

Merchandising
- In-charge for the over-all supervision of merchandise assortment and stock control of both Outright and Store Consigned to achieve maximum sales potential and ensures effective implementation of marketing, promotions and standard operating procedures of the company.

MARKETING MANAGER
- Develops marketing plan for the assigned brands/ products in close coordination with the Store Operations and Merchandising groups.
- Formulates strategic direction for the assigned brands/ products and translates these strategies to workable solutions that Build Business (Sales).
- Develops conceptual marketing breakthroughs in partnership with the advertising agencies.

ASSISTANT DIVISION MERCHANDISE MANAGER
- Responsible for financial, business and assortment planning and management.
- Develop and lead the merchandising team.

MERCHANDISE MANAGER
- Develop and plan merchandise assortments, advertising and sales promotions.
- Drive Sales and Gross Margin.
- Manage Monthly OTB (Open-to-Buy)
- Manage and develop suppliers.
- Implement and monitor visual merchandising standards.

BUSINESS PROCESS MANAGER
- Develop Business Process [illegible]
- Conduct regular business process [illegible]
- Consult, coordinate and support [illegible]

SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATION MANAGER
- Develop and maintain a proactive monitoring system [illegible]
- Perform regular audits of security policies, updating and changing procedures and policies to protect [illegible]
- Investigate, research and recommend opportunities for increased performance, security and stability of hardware, systems and processes.

SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR
- Installation, configuration, maintenance and monitoring of servers and branch operating system/network services.
- Design, test, implement and maintain Windows, Linux and AS/400 network configuration: domain, sites trust, user quota shares, user/group policies, audit and secure data back-up architecture operations and procedures.
- Conduct research and recommend up-to-date hardware/software technologies to enhance network performance, security, functionality and services.

PROGRAMMER
- Work with users on development of the software specifications.
- Follow complete specifications to perform a variety of programming assignments requiring knowledge of established programming procedures and data processing requirements.
- Maintain and modify programs.
- Make approved changes by amending documentation, developing processing logic, and coding changes.
- Test and document modifications and write operation instructions.

Candidates may pre-register @ **JobsDB.com** or they may email their resumes to **Recruit.SM.HO@sm-shoemart.com.**

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At D.M. Consunji, Inc. , to BUILD is our passion. With over Fifty (50) years of expertise in building national and international landmarks bringing pride and honor to the Filipino nation.

We would like to invite individuals who are highly competent, self-driven and have passion for excellence to join our organization:

SAFETY HEAD
- Must be a Licensed Engineer; preferably Male ; 28-40 yrs old;
- With at least 5 years experience in Safety related works gained in a construction industry;
- Must have a complete knowledge and analysis of codes, standards, laws and regulations that apply to safety and Occupational Health, Fire Protection and Life Safety as well as application of that knowledge to all workplace situations;
- Must have the skills to conduct training and development on Safety and Occupational Health Procedures;
- Must possess strong supervisory and leadership skils;
- With good interpersonal communication and technical writing skills; Good moral and high integrity; **DOLE** accredited .

QUALITY CONTROL HEAD
- Must be a licensed Civil Engineer;
- With at least 5 years of Project Management and Supervisory experience;
- With extensive knowledge and experience in Construction Operations, Engineering, Estimating in Industrial High-rise, Infrastructure and Housing Projects;
- Candidate should possess strong leadership skills and should be able to deal effectively with employees in all levels of the organization;
- Has the ability to communicate oral instructions and directions;
- Good moral and high integrity;
- Must be willing to be assigned out of town when necessary.

QUALITY CONTROL ENGINEER
- Licensed CE / ME / EE / Architects; Male / Female;
- 26-35 years old; with at least 5 years working experience gained in a construction industry;
- Demonstrate extensive knowledge of the basic requirements, concepts and procedures of quality assurance / control.

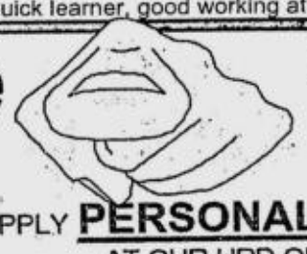
PLANNER / SCHEDULER
- Must be a licensed Civil Engineer;
- Male / Female; 25 - 35 years old;
- With at least 5 years working experience in the construction industry, 3 years of which were spent as a Planner / Scheduler using **Primavera P3.**

SAFETY ENGINEERS / OFFICERS
- Engineering graduates / Safety Practitioners; preferably with 3-5 years of experience as Safety Officer/Engineer in a construction company; Well-versed in Safety policies implementations, hazard/risk analysis;
- **DOLE / DENR** Accredited an advantage.

FIELD SUPERINTENDENT
- Must be a licensed Civil Engineer or Architect;
- With 2-5 years of Project Management Experience;
- With extensive knowledge and experience in Construction Operations, Engineering, Structural Estimations, Housing Projects, High-rise and infrastructures;

ACCOUNTANT
- BS Accountancy graduate or its equivalent; preferably a CPA
- Male / female; 24-35 years old; with at least 5 years working experience in the Accounting, Audit and/or Treasury Departments;
- Must have experience in General or Cost Accounting;
- Experience gained in a Construction Industry an advantage;
- Must be a quick learner, good working attitude and a team-player.

ADMIN OFFICER
- BS Industrial Engineering graduates or any related course;
- Preferably Male; 25-35 years old;
- With experience gained in a construction industry;
- Can deal with people in all levels of the organization;
- Good communication skills; a team player;
- Must be trustworthy and flexible.



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*** PREVIOUS APPLICANT NEED NOT APPLY ***

A Philippine subsidiary of a Korean company is seeking qualified applicants for the following positions:

1. **ADMINISTRATION MANAGER** - At least ten (10) years experience in human resource and operational management. Graduate of any management or related course.
2. **MARKETING MANAGER** – At least ten (10) years experience in marketing and management in tourist related ventures. Graduate of any marketing or related course.
3. **DEVELOPMENT MANAGER** – At least ten (10) years experience in construction and development management, particularly large-scale infrastructure projects. Licensed civil engineer with management experience preferred.
4. **PROJECT MANAGER** –Construction manager with at least ten (10) years experience in the development of hotels and resorts. Graduate of any related degree, licensed civil engineer preferred.
5. **ADMINISTRATION STAFF** – College graduate. Two (2) to three (3) years experience an advantage.
6. **MARKETING STAFF** – College graduate. Two (2) to three (3) years experience an advantage.
7. **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT STAFF** - College graduate. Two (2) to three (3) years experience an advantage.
8. **ARCHITECT** – Licensed architect with at least five (5) years work experience.
9. **DRAFTSMAN** – At least three (3) years work experience with knowledge of Computer Aided Design. Graduate of any related degree.
10. **PARALEGAL** – At least five (5) years experience in contract work, legal housekeeping and in-house legal assistance. Graduate of a law degree an advantage.
11. **ACCOUNTANT** – Certified Public Accountant with at least three (3) years experience in accounting and auditing related work.
12. **SECRETARY** –Excellent computer skills, particularly MS WORD and EXCEL. Graduate of any college course, with pleasing personality.

ABILITY TO SPEAK AND WRITE KOREAN AN ADVANTAGE.

Please email your resumés, with a 2x2 ID picture, to Quisumbing.Torres@BakerNet.Com.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS ON MARCH 14, 2007.

IMMEDIATE HIRING

Accounting Assistant
- CPA
- Good command of the English language (oral and written)
- With at least two (2) years work experience preferably with background in auditing
- Proficient in the use of computer, preferably with experience in using an accounting software
- At least 25 years old

Investment Analyst
- Graduate of a business course
- Good analytical skills
- Good command of the English language (oral and written)
- With at least two (2) years work experience in an investment house, bank or a stock brokerage firm
- Proficient in the use of computer, preferably with experience in using an accounting software
- At least 25 years old

Kindly submit your resumé at **PERAA, 16th Floor Multinational Bancorporation Centre, 6805 Ayala Avenue Makati** or via email at **peraa2@info.com.ph.**

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levelupgames.ph

You think you got game? Then join us!

We are looking for proactive team players who are committed to online gamers just as we are.

DATABASE ADMINISTRATOR
- Male or Female, not more than 35 years old
- Candidate must possess at least a Bachelor's/College Degree in Engineering (Computer/Telecommunication), Computer Science/ Information Technology or equivalent
- With more than 2 years of work experience in MS SQL Server DBA and programming
- Must be an expert in database design/development using MS SQL Server 2000
- Experience with T-SQL and programming stored procedures, triggers, and functions
- MS SQL Certification will be a plus
- MySQL experience will be an advantage
- With excellent problem solving skills, creative and innovative
- Must be fast learner and with excellent communication skills
- Must be able to work both independently, and in a team environment
- Proactive and highly analytical
- With ability to document solutions and apply the most applicable technologies to craft effective solutions

SYSTEM DEVELOPER
Skill requirements:
- Microsoft ASP.NET development
- Microsoft SQL Server 2000 (or higher)
- Microsoft IIS
- HTML/XHTML/XML/XSL/Javascript/CSS
- Flash Linux, Apache, PHP and MySQL will be a plus

Other requirements:
- Male or Female, not more than 35 years old
- Graduate of any IT course or related
- Has at least two years of exposure in programming using .Net and/or open source languages
- Experienced in SQL, documentation and systems life cycle development
- Proactive and highly analytical
- With good interpersonal, leadership and communication skills
- The ability to apply the most applicable technologies to craft effective solutions
- Lateral and self-motivated thinking
- Ability to document solutions

CHINESE COORDINATOR
- Proficient in both English and Mandarin
- Must have strong I.T. background
- Knowledgeable in database systems
- Experienced and knowledgeable in online games is a plus
- Must have excellent oral and written communication skills

PROJECT OFFICER
- Must have knowledge on good methodology and standards
- Must have good background in Information Technology, preferably knowledge in systems integration
- Must have very good oral and written communication skills
- With good people skills / time management skills
- With good leadership qualities and can make sound judgment
- Usability and QA background is a Plus

ACCOUNTING STAFF
- Male/Female, not more than 30 years old
- BS Accountancy graduate
- Experienced in Treasury and Revenue Accounting
- Knowledge in using SAP/Great Plains is an advantage

If you've got the above qualifications, head over to the **Level Up!, Inc.** office at 11/F Pacific Star Bldg., Makati Ave. cor. Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City and/or e-mail your resumes to **jobs@levelupgames.ph**

APP (Philippines) Inc.

We are the Philippine branch office of Asia Pulp & Paper Co., Ltd., one of the largest pulp and paper products in the world. We are currently seeking applications for the positions of:

Executive Assistant to perform a range of high level secretarial duties and administrative support to the Country Manager:
- College graduate with 3-5 years experience as Executive Assistant/Secretary
- Excellent oral and written skills
- Extremely organized and self-reliant and able to work well under pressure
- Bookkeeping and accounting experience a definite asset. Must have computer proficiency in Excel, Power Point and Microsoft Word

Sales Support Staff to provide clerical support to the sales staff. This is temporary position wich may change to permanent status:
- College graduate
- Good written and oral communication skills and able to work well with clients
- Computer literate. Must know Excel, Power Point and Microsoft Word
- Willing to undertake various duties and responsibilities

Interested parties may send their application, resumé, current and expected salaries, and one passport size photo either by mail to:

Country Manager
APP (Philippines) Inc.
Room 1007, Antel 2000 Bldg.
121 Valero Street, Salcedo Village
Makati City

Or via e-mail (with scanned picture) to: **appphil@pldtdsl.net**
Only short listed candidates will be notified.

LANDSCAPE DESIGNER / ARCHITECT AUTOCADD DRAFTSMAN

ZABARTE GARDEN CO. is seeking experienced & motivated Architects to join our team.
Work experience must be more than 4 years, AUTOCAD, 3D MAX, PHOTOSHOP & related Architecture softwares.

Email resumé to **marketing@zabartegarden.com**
website at **www.zabartegarden.com**
or text at **0915-9232792**

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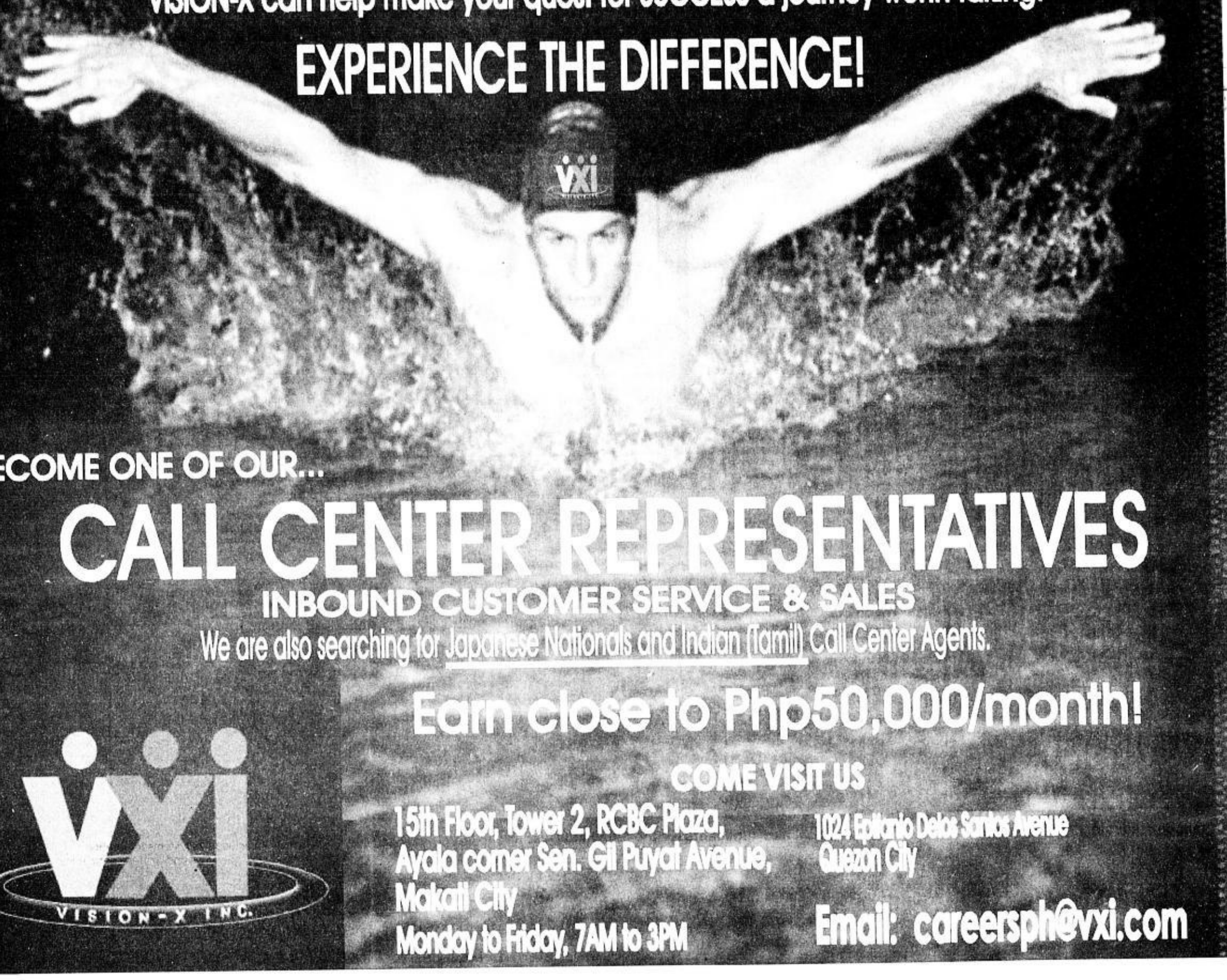

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Quezon City

Email: careersph@vxi.com

VISION-X INC.

We are a Manufacturing Company belonging to the Top 1000 Corporations. We have vacancies for:

ACCOUNTING CLERK
- Female, single, not more than 30 years old
- Accounting Graduate with good scholastic record
- Preferably with experience in auditing
- Must be computer literate

SALES REPRESENTATIVE
- Male, single or married not more than 30 years old
- College Graduate with good scholastic record
- Proficient in oral & written communication skills
- Good personality, honest, trustworthy & diligent

SALES SECRETARY
- Female, single, not more than 30 years old
- College Graduate of any 4-year Business Course
- Preferably with experience, computer literate
- Must be honest, trustworthy & diligent

ELECTRICAL ENGINEER
- Male, single or married not more than 30 years old
- Graduate of Electrical Engineering
- At least with 2 years experience in a manufacturing plant
- With knowledge in Electropneumatics

Please send your resume, transcript of records and passport size photo to:
P.O. Box 12940 Ortigas Center, Pasig City
or e-mail at acs.sec@eastern.com.ph

ACHIEVE YOUR HIGHEST CAREER GOALS! WITH US, YOU CAN!

EARTH+STYLE
Your Lifestyle Property Developer

Earth+Style is a lifestyle property developer committed to enhancing quality of life by creating communities and fulfilling aspirations by offering lifestyle solutions.

It believes in the impassioned practice of its values towards its mission of championing the Filipino middle income family while being steadfast in its commitment to the balance of family and work life.

Earth+Style is a stable, vibrant organization devoted to nurturing its people towards their full potential and making them partners in growth.

Earth+Style Management Team

VP for Operations
Manages and supports the Operating Units in ensuring target productivity and consistency in quality of output. In-charge of planning and implementing programs that adhere to the overall service goals and objectives of the Business Development Unit and of establishing performance standards which would be beneficial to internal and external clients.

Marketing Manager
Spearheads the conceptualization, implementation and management of concrete marketing plans, programs and strategies that aim to reinforce and strengthen product image/branding, industry performance and customer responsiveness.

Customer Service Manager
Primarily responsible for ensuring a high level of customer satisfaction through efficient customer service operations, prompt processing of requests and complaints, and proactive customer fulfillment.

Construction Manager
Manages and oversees total product delivery by adhering to the timetable of the project. Performs Supply Chain Management by coordinating with various internal and external parties involved in the development process. In-charge of application and delivery of project documentary requirements relating to the development of the product such as titles and permits.

Finance Manager
Primarily responsible for the management and control of the company's financial requirements by analyzing actual cashflow and financial performance. Monitors and controls over-all budget requirements and utilization to ensure over-all profitability of the company.

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Visit us at: 37th Floor, Orient Square Bldg.,
Don Francisco Ortigas Jr. Road
(formerly Emerald Avenue)
Ortigas Center, Pasig City

You may also e-mail your resume to: **hrd@earthandstyle.com**

NAGASE PHILIPPINES INTERNATIONAL SERVICES CORPORATION

Nagase Philippines International Services Corporation, a Japanese technology and intelligence oriented trading company engaged in four key business areas in Chemicals, Plastics, Electronics and Health care is looking for

SALES ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Qualifications:
- Graduate level equivalent degree preferably in Business Management or Marketing
- Excellent skills in presentation, negotiation and relationship building
- Proficient in oral and communication skills
- With 2-3 years sales work experience with good exposure on account management functions
- Not more than 30 yrs. old and preferably with own car

Closing Date: **March 19, 2007**

Qualified candidates please send your application letter and Curriculum Vitae with details of your work experience and academic records to **bombie@nagase.com.ph** or you could send it to the address below.

Nagase Philippines International Services Corporation
Attn: Human Resource Manageer
18/F Trafalgar Plaza
H.V. Dela Costa Street
Salcedo Village, Makati City
Fax (632) 8118296-97
Phone inquiries discouraged

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English, Filipino, Math, History, Biology, Botany, Zoology, Chemistry, Physics

- SPECIAL SUBJECT (for High School)
  Computer, Food Technology, Nutrition, Home Economics, P.E., Agriculture, Music, Religion, Spanish, French & Art
- ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS (for immediate hiring)
  Construction & Maintenance Engineers, Purchasers, Architects, Guidance Counselors/ Psychometricians, Accounting Assistants, Administrative Assistants, Librarians, Secretaries, Encoders, Cashier, Waitress for School Restaurant

Apply in person with your Resume, Recent Photo, Transcript of Records and Letter of Application or send it to:
3 Eisenhower Street, Greenhills, San Juan, M.M.
e-mail: hrd@obmontessori.edu.ph

Australian Government
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) is seeking to fill the position of

ACIAR ASSISTANT MANAGER (PHILIPPINES)

The Duties and Responsibilities of the position are summarized below. The commencing salary is Php 41, 326.99 per month. The position is available on a 2-year renewable contract basis with a probationary period of 3 months. Hiree will be assigned in Manila.

General Duties and Responsibilities:

ACIAR is an Australian Government Authority that operates within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Its overseas posts are responsible for liaison, coordination and administrative activities required for the effective management of ACIAR's collaborative research program in their respective overseas partner countries.

The ACIAR Assistant Manager is expected to develop the position in a way that reflects ACIAR's flexible style and separate identity as a Statutory Authority within the Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio. The Assistant Manager position within each ACIAR overseas post needs to work with minimal local supervision and have the ability to order priorities independently in their day-to-day management of the office environment. They are responsible to the ACIAR Manager for the effective day-to-day administration of the office.

ACIAR offices are located within the Australian Embassy and the Manager and staff conform generally to local administrative procedures in the post. In their role as representatives of ACIAR, Managers and staff are subject to the authority of the Head of Mission who should be kept informed of major policy matters and significant developments relevant to ACIAR activities in the partner country.

The Assistant Manager is expected to be able to plan, organise and undertake work associated with ACIAR's program, with limited direction and should be able to provide: scientific, technical and policy support services; formal government contracts; and administrative and management support services.

The ACIAR Assistant Manager must provide high quality support for the implementation of effective overseas public relations and communications /information dissemination activities. And be able to provide high level of professional representation of ACIAR's work in the absence of the Country Manager.

Criteria for Appointment:

In order to achieve these responsibilities the Assistant Manager needs to have, or have the ability to obtain the following qualifications and experience:

- ✓ At least a Bachelor's degree preferably in Agriculture or related fields;
- ✓ High level of fluency in written and spoken English;
- ✓ Representational, communication and interpersonal skills of a high order;
- ✓ Ability to assist the ACIAR Manager in a wide range of administrative tasks requiring a high level of organization skill and the capacity to work with limited supervision;
- ✓ Good keyboard and word processing skills, and experience with computer-based management information systems; proficiency in the use of Excel, Powerpoint and Publisher would be desirable;
- ✓ Demonstrated ability to use initiative, organise priorities and work within tight deadlines;
- ✓ Knowledge of government, university and agricultural research and institutional infrastructure;
- ✓ Relevant qualifications.

Applicants should include in their application: a resume; statement addressing each of the Criteria for Appointment; and names and contact details of at least two work referees.

Applications should be lodged on or before close of business Friday, 23 March 2007 and addressed to:

ACIAR Country Manager (Philippines)
Box MK167 c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer
Ground Floor, Atrium Building, Makati Avenue, Makati City

GLOBAL CITY INNOVATIVE COLLEGE

OUR SCHOOL IS CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR ***EDUCATORS*** WHO ARE COMPETENT, PROFESSIONAL, INNOVATIVE, DEDICATED AND SERVICE-ORIENTED, WITH EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND A PROFOUND DESIRE TO SHARE ONE'S KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE.

- **LECTURER AND CLINICAL INSTRUCTORS WITH MAN, OR MAEd**
- **LECTURER FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**
- **LECTURER FOR NATURAL SCIENCES MAJOR IN ZOOLOGY**
- **LECTURER FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION**
- **MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION TRAINERS** (MEDICAL AND ENGLISH)

WE ALSO NEED THE FOLLOWING FOR OUR ***ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT GROUPS:***

- **MANAGEMENT FOR INFORMATION SYSTEMS OFFICER**
  -With Technical Expertise in software, hardware, and hardware related problems
  -Knowledge in Programming and Access and with advanced skills in FoxPro
- **HR SPECIALIST**
  - With experience in Organizational Development.
  - Knowledge in Recruitment, Training and Evaluation.
- **IT STAFF**
  -With technical expertise in software, hardware and network related problems.
- **SCHOOL LIBRARIAN**
  - Adept in all facets of Library functions.

Above industry compensation and career advancements a professional work environment await successful applicants.
Please send your Comprehensive Resume, Transcript of Records (BS and MA or Doctoral), PRC License (if applicable) and 4 1x1 pictures with yellow background or apply in person to:

HRD : **GLOBAL CITY INNOVATIVE COLLEGE**
3/F Bonifacio Technology Center
31st Street, cor. 2nd Avenue, Cresent Park West
Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City 1634
Email: hr_dept@gcic.edu.ph

"Only qualified candidates will be called for interview"

---

e-Front runners

FUJI ELECTRIC PHILIPPINES INC., a 100% Japanese-owned semiconductor company and is based in Carmelray Industrial Park 1, Canlubang, Calamba, Laguna is in need of applicants for the following positions for immediate hiring :

1. Accounting Supervisor

Female, BS Accountancy w/ CPA Licensure, Computer Literate and with experience in Cost Accounting.

2. Maintenance Supervisor

Male, At least 26 yrs.old, B.S Electrical Engineering/ECE graduate, with at least 3 yrs. work experience in the same field.

3. Process Engineer

Male, At least 21~25 yrs. old, B.S. E.C.E/E.E./M.E./I.E / Chemical Eng'g Graduate, with or without work experience.

4. Production Engineer

Male, At least 21~25 yrs. old, B.S. E.C.E. / E.E./M.E./I.E / Chemical Eng'g Graduate, with or without work experience.

Apply at : **FUJI ELECTRIC PHILIPPINES, INC.**
107 Enterprise Drive SEPZII Carmelray Industrial Park I
Canlubang, Calamba Laguna
personnel1@fep.fujielectric.com
(049) 549-3291 or (02) 844-6183 loc. 208 , 220

World Vision

World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organization dedicated to working with children, families and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by addressing the causes of poverty and injustice.

World Vision helps transform the lives of the world's poorest children and families in nearly 100 countries.

In the Philippines, World Vision Development Foundation provides assistance to the children, families and communities in 34 provinces and 22 cities.

We are looking for Christian professionals whose faith and values match our mission to work with the poor for the following positions:

URGENT JOB OPENINGS

MONITORING AND EVALUATION ASSOCIATE FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: Must have a minimum bachelor's degree or its equivalent; 24 – 35 years old; at least two (2) years experience in monitoring and evaluation, particularly in the field of health or social development; at least two (2) years experience in community organizing, preferably in urban settings; background in organizational assessment and development and social research, an advantage; proficiency in Microsoft Word, Excel, Powerpoint and Access; excellent written documentation and report-making skills; knowledge of Bisaya and Ilonggo dialects, an advantage.

TRAINING OFFICER: Must have a minimum bachelor's degree or its equivalent; 24 – 35 years old; at least two (2) years experience in the development of training designs, particularly in community development interventions; at least two (2) years experience in conducting community and organizational capacity-building activities; background in community organizing, preferably in urban settings; training experience with a wide array of audience – from grassroots implementers, supervisors and managers, definitely a plus factor; background in social research, including development of survey/assessment tools, an advantage; proficiency in the use of microsoft powerpoint; knowledge in graphics/visual communication a plus factor; excellent oral and written communication and documentation skills; knowledge of Bisaya and Ilonggo dialects, an advantage.

CITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (for Caloocan): Must have a bachelor's degree in Allied Medical course or Social Science; 24-32 years old; at least 1-2 years experience in community organizing, preferably in urban settings; background in organizational assessment and capacity development, an advantage; previous engagement in health program/project, an advantage; proficiency in MS Office; excellent written documentation and report-making skills.

All applicants must have a strong Christian commitment as evidenced by life and character and is open to ecumenical orientation. Please send your application letter & comprehensive resume' with picture detailing work history to: **sherill_dela_torre@wvi.org / phl_hrd@wvi.org** or write to WORLD VISION DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, c/o Human Resources Department (Attn: Sherill Dela Torre), 883 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City, 1104.

TRTA Programme
Job Vacancy

The Consortium led by **ECA, S.A.U.** Service Contractor for the EU-assisted **Trade Related Technical Assistance (TRTA) Programme** in the Philippine **(EuropeAid/121182/C/SV/PH)**, is seeking qualified Filipino applicants for the post of

Management Competences Expert

The overall objective of the TRTA programme, which is based in Manila, is to assist the Philippines to significantly enhance trade and investment with the European Union (EU).

The selected applicant will work for 164 days as a Local Short-Term Expoert (LSTE) under the **Customs Component of the TRTA Programme** and will report directly to the Intenational Customs Risk Management Expert posted at the Bureau of Customs (BoC). The tasks incude detailed assessment of the competence requirements of BoC staff against their job description as input to preparation of training modules for the Customs Academy. The qualification requirements include a Master's degree in Business Management, Human Resource Management or any other related discipline, and at least 10-years experience in a senior position dealing with human resource management.

QUALIFIED APPLICANTS ARE ASKED TO SUBMIT THEIR LETTER OF APPLICATION AND ACCOMPLISHED CURRICULUM VITAE IN EU FORMAT DOWNLOADABLE AT www.trtaphils.org on or before 20 March 2007 by email to: MR. COLIN WILLIAMS, International Customs Risk Management Expert, colinw@operamail.com. The full Terms of reference for the post can be found in the same website.

CREW REQUIREMENTS UNTIL JUNE 2007
TO MAN ANOTHER 70 VESSELS

Our Principal *Marlow Navigation* is urgently needing the following positions for our modern Container vessels and bulk carriers:

• Master	from US$5,115.-	6 mos. Contract
• Chief Mate	from US$3,795.-	8 mos. Contract
• 2nd Mate	from US$2,640.-	10 mos. Contract
• 3rd Mate	from US$1,584.- to US$1,824.-	10 mos. Contract
• Chief Engr	from US$4,950.-	6 mos. Contract
• 2nd Engr	from US$3,795.-	8 mos. Contract
• 3rd Engr	from US$2,640.-	10 mos. Contract
• Electrician	from US$3,019.-	10 mos. Contract
• C/Cook	from US$1,378.- to US$1,486.-	10 mos. Contract
• Ck/B (AB/Ck)	from US$1,067.-	10 mos. Contract
• Bosun/Fitter	from US$1,105.- to US$1,213.-	10 mos. Contract
• K/AB	from US$1,004.-	10 mos. Contract
• AB/Oiler	from US$903.-	10 mos. Contract
• OS/Wiper	from US$680.-	10 mos. Contract

Plus Seniority Bonus

GERMAN TANKER

- 2/Off US$2,970.-
- 2/Eng US$5,780.-

Apply now and build your career with us:

Crewserve, Inc.
Rm. 401 LBH Bldg.,
1431 A. Mabini St.,
Ermita, Manila
e-mail: recruitment@crewserve.com.ph
POEA Lic. 250-SB-061604-R

Galant Maritime Services, Inc.
1101 Ermita Center Building
1350 Roxas Boulevard,
Ermita, Manila
PIC: C/M Norman Miranda
PIC: C/M Chito Mendoza
e-mail: recruitment_galant@marlow.com.ph
Tel. # 525-6092; 526-6888 loc 115
POEA Lic. 108-SB-091603-R

An established design firm specializing in hospitality and commercial design is seeking young, dynamic, highly motivated and energetic individuals to fill its personnel requirements of:

Designer & Senior Detailer

BS Architecture or Interior Design graduate, should be well-experienced in production of architectural and interior fit-out details/ documentation of high end restaurant, commercial and residential projects.

Can handle pressure and can work with minimum supervision.
Should have worked at least 2 years as Designer, and as Senior Detailer, respectively from a reputable firm.

Presentation and rendering skills is a must for Designer. Computer literate, has working knowledge of Autocadd 2004. Adobe Photoshop ACS, and Manual Drafting skills required for Senior Detailer

Experience in furniture design and details and overseas experience is a plus.

Good salary and benefits await the successful candidate. Kindly fax or e-mail your resumé to:

The Administrator
Fax No. 632 637 2040
E-mail: ecsmia@gmail.com

Phil-Jobnet System assures registration of HEIs graduates

From page 13

accessible globally and locally to both job seekers and industries through its Internet website address, http://phil-job.net

Brion said the inclusion of about half a million graduates yearly from the country's higher or tertiary learning institutions in the country's biggest jobs search system, will be a boon to opportunities, as well the human resources requirements, of industries here and abroad.

"This effort will, in effect, lessen the phenomenon of jobs and skills mismatch or structural unemployment, and also provide a safe, convenient access to both graduates [and employers] to legitimate opportunities." The Labor Chief said.

"Considering that they do not readily access other jobs search sites in the Internet, the Phil-Jobnet system, which is now the biggest jobs search services site, will complement the entire effort of the Philippine government, together with the social partners and industries here and overseas, in providing job friendly opportunities and access to our skilled human resources."

Brion further emphasized that the DOLE's completion of the negotiations and the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the CHED is "a basic requirement accomplished towards our effort to set up in strategic areas like city/ town halls, and malls nationwide some 100 jobs search/skills registry kiosks this year, to boost the national goal to ensure a gainfully employed Filipino workforce."

For his part, CHED Chair Carlito S. Puno will issue, consistent with the MOA, a Memorandum to all HEIs to make the registration of graduates in the Phil-Jobnet system a requirement, prior to the issuance of the necessary Special Order (SO).

Brion thanked the CHED for its synergy with DOLE and the social partners to ensure the advancement of the national goal to develop a gainfully employed workforce. The Labor Secretary specially noted the pivotal role of the CHED as the country's governing body in charge of the colleges and universities in the public and private spheres, in the process reinforcing the development of the country's human capital development through quality and accessible education.

Explore the most global hotel company.

InterContinental Hotels Group is the world's largest hotel group by number of rooms. InterContinental Hotels Group owns, manages, leases or franchises, through various subsidiaries, over 3,700 hotels and 556,246 guest rooms in nearly 100 countries and territories around the world. The Group owns a portfolio of well recognized and respected hotel brands including InterContinental® Hotels & Resorts, CrownePlaza® Hotels & Resorts, Holiday Inn® Hotels and Resorts, Holiday Inn Express®, StaybridgeSuites®, Candlewood Suites® and Hotel Indigo®, and also manages the world's largest hotel loyalty programme, Priority Club® Rewards with over 31 million members worldwide.

IHG
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Address: 29/F, Tower II, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave, Makati City
Website: www.ichotelsgroup-phlro.com
Email: phlro.resumes@ihg.com
Tel: 8578800 **Fax:** 8578881

Our Philippine Reservations Center is looking for:

CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES / RESERVATION SALES AGENTS

(English, Spanish, Korean, Arabic, or Japanese*)

Job summary

- Represents the Company by coordinating all aspects of Priority Club Programs and serves as liaison between the guest and hotels in order to maintain member satisfaction
- Delivers Individualized Customer Experiences by focusing on finding hotel accommodations that will best fit our guests needs

Requirements

- Must be a Bachelor/College degree holder
- Must have excellent written and verbal communication skills with one of the following languages: English, Spanish, Korean, Arabic, or Japanese*
- Customer service and/or sales experience an advantage
- Education and experience in the hospitality or IT industry an advantage
- Must be willing to work on a rotating shift
- Fresh graduates are encouraged to apply

* *Japanese-speaking CSR's must be native speakers and will be working on day shift*

EMPLOYMENT SUPERVISOR

Job summary

- Responsible for planning, developing and implementing recruitment and sourcing activities
- Establishes and maintains external relationships with education institutions, government and recruitment agencies, and other possible recruitment sources
- Provides support to Recruitment by managing some recruitment processes

Requirements

- Candidate must possess a Bachelor's/College Degree in Human Resources, Marketing, or Management
- Has 5 years work experience in doing recruitment functions, 2 years of which in a supervisory level capacity, call center experience is an advantage
- Excellent organizational, project-management, decision-making, and interpersonal skills
- Has strong sourcing/marketing/branding experience

Other available positions:

E-Contacts Web Support, Hotel Performance Support Specialists and Data Management Coordinators.

IHG Employees enjoy:

Great people & opportunities, world-class training and development, competitive salary and benefit packages, non-taxable allowances, advancement opportunities, and discounts in any of our international hotel brands.

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FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING

HINGE INQUIRER PUBLICATIONS, a dynamic company engaged in the publication of the most influential niche magazines today, is in immediate need of the following:

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

The Account Executive will have a primary responsibility of acquiring advertising placements for assigned Hinge Inquirer Publication magazines.

- Generate new revenue through sales of advertising placements and event sponsorships according to set company quotas
  - Prospecting
  - Conduct of sales presentations
  - Development of proposals
  - Negotiation/Closing
- Account Management
- Participation in marketing initiatives/events

REQUIREMENTS:

- Male/Female, 21 to 30 years old
- Candidate must possess at least a Bachelor's/College Degree in Business Studies/Advertising/Management, Sales & Marketing, or equivalent
- Highly motivated, a team player, with good communication, negotiation and presentation skills, thrives under pressure and can work with minimal supervision
- Applicants must be willing to work in Makati City and do field work
- Preferably has at least 1 year experience in Corporate Sales/Advertising/ Publication

PRINT PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

The Print Production Assistant will be directly involved in the scheduling, organization, supervision, monitoring and approval of the publication of the company's titles and projects, and assist the Print Production Supervisor in the performance of his/her duties and responsibilities.

- single, 20-31 years old, college graduate
- preferably with some pre-press experience and knowledge of printing processes
- computer literate, with knowledge of InDesign, Photoshop and other related applications
- punctual, organized and methodical
- knowledgeable in color and design theory

ADMINISTRATION MANAGER

Qualifications:

- Graduate of any Engineering Course
- 2 to 3 years experience in building administration or related job
- 2 years management experience
- Exposure in administration services and budget management

ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT

Qualifications:

- College graduate preferably with Accounting background
- At least 1 year experience in a similar job
- With knowledge of basic purchasing principles
- Excellent interpersonal, communication, report writing and filing skills

hinge inquirer PUBLICATIONS

Interested applicants may email their resumés to hrd@hip.ph, spanlilio@inquirer.com.ph or bring their resumé, two (2) 2x2 photos, Transcript of Records, and any valid I.D. to our office at Unit 330, Mile Long Building, Amorsolo corner Javier Streets, Makati City, from Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. • Tel. Nos.: 759-2284, 759-2024, 840-0196, 813-6848

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EARTH+STYLE
Your Lifestyle Property Developer

Earth+Style is a lifestyle property developer committed to enhancing quality of life by creating communities and fulfilling aspirations by offering lifestyle solutions.

It believes in the impassioned practice of its values towards its mission of championing the Filipino middle income family while being steadfast in its commitment to the balance of family and work life.

Earth+Style is a stable, vibrant organization devoted to nurturing its people towards their full potential and making them partners in growth.

Earth+Style Sales Team

VP for Sales

Manages and oversees all sales-related programs and formulates strategies to boost sales performance. Responsible for motivating the internal and external sales force. Develops sales programs and sales performance standards. Manages the recruitment of the external sales force i.e. brokers, global network managers and consultants, and property consultants.

Sales Managers

Primarily responsible for the conceptualization and implementation of sales plans, strategies & programs that would result in the achievement of sales targets. In-charge of managing, developing, and training external sales force to enhance selling skills and expand sales reach.

Brokers and Property Consultants are invited to apply for accreditation.

COME JOIN OUR QUEST FOR GROWTH

Visit us at: 37th Floor, Orient Square Bldg.
Don Francisco Ortigas Jr. Road
(formerly Emerald Avenue)
Ortigas Center, Pasig City

You may also e-mail your resume to: **hrd@earthandstyle.com**

Project Angel Tree grants wishes of 70 more child laborers

ANOTHER 70 CHILD LABORERS' WISHES came true as the Department of Labor and Employment's (DOLE) Bureau of Women and Young Workers (BWYW) granted them through the "Angel Kisses Part II" at the Enchanted Kingdom in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

Labor and Employment Secretary Arturo D. Brion cited the role of compassionate donors in making the wishes of the disadvantaged kids come true.

He said that the Project Angel Tree, after this gift giving, shall now be relegated to the various regions for a wider outreach to the thousands of child labor victims across the country.

Brion cited a report of Bureau of Women and Young Workers (BWYW) Director Cynthia R. Cruz that the gift giving and treat for the 70 child laborers had been made possible through "Angel Kisses Part II," a component of the BWYW's flagship Project Angel Tree.

Cruz said the beneficiaries were both male and female child laborers, with ages ranging from 8 to 17, engaged in sampaguita vending, plastic bag vending, candy vending, kakanin vending, street vending, scavenging, kasambahay work, fetching water, weeding, bakaw, peddling, sugarcane plantation work, pagpupunas ng sapatos, and other types of work.

Project Angel Tree endeavors to uplift the economic and social conditions of child laborers and their families, with the DOLE serving as a 'broker' or a bridge between child laborers in need of assistance, and those able to extend the assistance needed.

We are a *fast-moving, fast-growing*
integrated marketing company
that is looking for **dynamic individuals**
who can *catch up*.

Account Executive
- Male or Female
- College Graduate from reputable schools & universities
- Excellent written & oral communication skills
- Dynamic, aggressive, creative & an out-of-the-box thinker
- Knowledge/experience in advertising, marketing, promotions & events management an advantage
- For *Metro Manila Office* only

Retail Account Manager
- Male or Female
- College Graduate from reputable schools & universities
- Excellent written & oral communication skills Strong background in sales
- Previous experience in handling food & other fast-moving consumer products an advantage
- Knowledge and interest in new technologies & gadgets a plus
- Placements for: *Metro Manila, Baguio, Pampanga Laguna, Cebu, Iloilo and Davao*

Accountant
- Male or Female
- Accounting Graduate from a reputable university
- Not more than 30 years old
- At least 2 years experience as an Accounting Clerk
- Good written and oral communications
- For *Metro Manila Office* only

Promo Personnel
- Female
- At least High School Graduate or College Level
- Good communication skills
- Previous experience in promo and sales a plus

Field Supervisors
- Male or Female
- College Graduate from reputable schools & universities
- Excellent written & oral communication skills
- Strong background in sales an advantage
- Knowledge and interest in new technologies & gadgets a plus

Product Specialists
- Male or Female
- College Graduate from reputable schools
- Excellent written & oral communication skills
- Excellent selling skills
- Knowledge and interest in new technologies & gadgets a plus
- Placements for: *Metro Manila, Pampanga, CDO-Iligan, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, Pangasinan, Bacolod, Cebu & Davao*

Visualizer
- A Fine Arts Graduate (Advertising, Graphic Design & other related courses)
- Good communication skills
- Oozes with creativity and originality
- Must be computer-savvy (CorelDraw, Photoshop, MS Office), knowledge in 3D applications (3D StudioMax etc.) a plus
- For *Metro Manila Office* only

Rush now and send your application to **P.O. Box M-03 Makati City**, *or email us at* **application32007@yahoo.com.ph**

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION
REQUIRES

Programme Officer (Special Services Agreement)

Duties:
- Provide technical assistance in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of tobacco control initiatives in the Philippines;
- Establish the operational framework and facilitate the effective implementation of tobacco-control initiatives in the Philippines;
- Assist with the establishment of an effective national coordination mechanism for tobacco control supported by a broad coalition of governmental and nongovernmental NGOs;
- Collaborate closely with institutional partners, including assistance to grant applicants;
- Monitor and follow up programme activities to ensure their proper and timely implementation in accordance to the plan of action and provide proper documentation of all activities;
- Perform other related duties as may be assigned.

Qualifications:
University degree in medicine and/or related health field with postgraduate specialization in public health; Extensive experiences in health promotion and advocacy, networking, and development, implementation, and management of health projects; Ability to work and interact with government, and nongovernmental organizations and other partners; Broad knowledge about FCTC, RA 9211, RA 9334 and related national policies and legislation on tobacco control; Ability to work harmoniously as a member of a team and adapt to diverse educational and cultural backgrounds and maintain standards of personal conduct; Excellent command of spoken and written English; No professional relationship with any entity directly involved in the production, manufacture, distribution or sale of tobacco or any tobacco products.

Only well-qualified candidates should apply with a detailed curriculum vitae and recent passport size photograph to:

WHO REPRESENTATIVE'S OFFICE
Bldg. 9, Department of Health
Tayuman St., Sta. Cruz, Manila

no later than two weeks following this advertisement. **Only candidates under serious consideration will be contacted.**

WHO has a smoke-free environment and does not recruit smokers or other tobacco users.

A BIG EXPANDING FOOD COMPANY URGENTLY NEEDS:

☐ **2-Accounting / Customer Service Staff**
Qualifications:
- Female, 21-26 years old, Graduate of any business course.
- Graduating students may apply.

☐ **1-Quality Systems Officer**
Qualifications:
- Female 25-30 years old, B.S. Food Technology, Chemistry or Chemical Engineering degree holder.
- At least 2 years working experience in Quality Systems & Documentation in Food Manufacturing & Institution.

Interested applicants may send their comprehensive resumé with 2x2 ID Picture and Transcript of Records to:

U.P. P.O. Box 15, Diliman Quezon City 1101

For Immediate Hiring
PHARMACIST
- 21-25 years old
- Single or married
- Licensed Pharmacist
- Experience not necessary

Interested applicants may apply personally at:

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54-A 13th AVE., MURPHY,
CUBAO, QUEZON CITY
Tel. # (02) 995-82-93

Please bring your Resumé, Official Transcript of Records and any of your valid I.D.
Email: **seammed_gem@yahoo.com**

The country's most widely read and circulated newspaper is in need of:

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER — A BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

DESK EDITOR
QUALIFICATIONS:
- College graduate major in Journalism or any Social Sciences course
- Must have 3 years experience in newspaper Journalism
- With at least 1 year experience in editing and designing/layouting pages

SYSTEMS ANALYST / PROGRAMMER
QUALIFICATIONS:
- College degree holder in Computer Science or Computer Engineering with a business background
- 1 to 2 years experience as systems analyst / programmer
- Must have work experience in Powerbuilder, MS SQL 2000, Sybase SQL or other Relational Database Management System. Knowledge in Visual Basic, VB Scripting, Perl Scripting is an advantage.
- Can work with minimal supervision

SERVICE ENGINEER
QUALIFICATIONS:
- Graduate of Computer Engineering / ECE
- 6 months to one year experience on this job
- Knowledge of computer operations systems like Windows XP and Windows 2000/ MAC OS X, desktop applications like MS Office, Open Office, Email Client, Adobe products, Troubleshooting Skills, Interpersonal & Communication Skills.
- Knowledge in network

HR CLERK
QUALIFICATIONS:
- College graduate preferably major in Psychology or Behavioral Science
- With at least 6 months experience in recruitment or benefits process
- Service-oriented and can work in minimum supervision

DRIVER
QUALIFICATIONS:
- High School graduate
- Holder of a Professional Driver's License
- 1-2 years experience in collection work or similar field
- Familiar with roads, districts, areas
- Knowledge of basic mechanical repairs and traffic rules and regulations

GRAPHICS ARTIST
QUALIFICATIONS:
- College graduate preferably Fine Arts
- 1 year experience as Graphics Designer
- Knowledge of Photoshop, Adobe InDesign
- Skilled in manual and computer based illustration, page design and artwork

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Qualifications:
- College graduate preferably in English, Mass Communications or Journalism
- Excellent skills in English grammar, proofreading, layouting, encoding
- Knowledge in MS Word, Pagemaker

Send your application letter and comprehensive resumé to:

THE HR MANAGEMENT SERVICES HEAD
Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inc.
Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo)
Corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City
E-mail: recruitment@inquirer.com.ph

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER — The Power of Knowing

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Oxfam America

REGIONAL ADVOCACY OFFICER
EAST ASIA REGIONAL OFFICE

Oxfam America is a leading International Relief & Development organization with offices across the developing world working towards long-term solutions to global poverty & injustice. The East Asia Regional Office (EARO) in Phnom Penh is currently seeking an experienced & motivated individual to join the team as the Regional Advocacy Officer. This position will support programs in livelihood security, natural resource management & humanitarian response across East Asia to implement advocacy and campaign related initiatives including grant-making, research and analysis, capacity building and networking.

SUMMARIZED PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES:

This position will include:
- designing & implementing a coherent, balanced & integrated regional advocacy & campaigning strategy for all programs;
- working in conjunction with Oxfam affiliates, partners & allies to implement, monitor, evaluate & learn from the effectiveness of these advocacy initiatives;
- developing & maintaining links & alliances with like-minded organizations & stakeholders to ensure the coordination of advocacy & campaign initiatives;
- assisting Oxfam America's Washington DC Office in monitoring the development of bilateral, regional, & multilateral trade relations relevant to East Asia with clear USA links; and
- supporting partners by working to build capacity to respond to advocacy opportunities, to increase awareness & build effectiveness, conduct monitoring visits, administer partner grants & recommend appropnate follow up.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE
- Masters degree in social or political sciences, or international relations.
- At least five (5) years relevant employment experience preferably in the East Asia region with considerable field experience
- Demonstrable experience in developing advocacy & campaigning strategies.
- Good knowledge of social mobilization strategies & tactics.
- Interest in Human Rights issues and social change;
- Demonstrable and effective experience in gender issues;
- An excellent command of English; knowledge of other Mekong languages an advantage;
- Comprehensive computer skills.

CORE COMPETENCIES
- Leadership and facilitation skills with an ability to learn quickly.
- A team player; works well in a multi-cultural environment, communicates readily & shares learning.
- Prepared to undertake extensive travel in the region (up to 30%) & work long hours.
- Confidence in working alone but to ask when help is needed.

APPLICATIONS CLOSE 30 March 2007.
The full job description can be requested by email to eastasia@oxfamamerica.org. or downloaded from http://www.oxfamamerica.org.
Applications to be sent by email a CV and cover letter addressing the above criteria. Please write in the subject heading **"APPLICATION FOR REGIONAL ADVOCACY OFFICER POSITION".**
Women & regional Nationals are strongly encouraged to apply.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM
Foreign-Assisted Projects Office

NOTICE OF VACANCIES

The Second Agrarian Reform Communities Development Project (ARCDP2), a World Bank funded project of the Department, is currently looking for **TWO (2) JUNIOR FINANCE SPECIALISTS** to assist in the overall financial management systems and procedures of the Central Project Office (CPO) in order to support the effective delivery programs, ensure proper management and control of project assets and funds and effect the regular submission of withdrawal applications and financial monitoring reports to the World Bank.

The JFS should hold a professional qualification in accounting and be a member of the PICPA. The/she should have at least 8 years professional experience covering government accounting systems, installation of financial management systems, financial monitoring and preparation of financial reports. Experience in working in foreign-assisted projects and familiarity with LGU accounting systems would be an advantage. He/she should be computer literate, with good communication skills, and have the ability to deliver clear, concise, written reports. Copy of the Terms of Reference (TOR) containing detailed job description may be obtained from Ms Daisy Lopez-Zita at the address below during office hours.

Interested applicants must submit the following: a) detailed curriculum vitae; b) application letter outlining relevance of background and experience to the position applied for; and c) 3 current references, ALL IN PRINTED COPY, postmarked no later than 23 March 2007 to

The Chief Finance, Procurement and Administration Officer
(Reference: JFS-01-2007)
ARCDP2 Central Project Office
FAPSO Annex Building
Department of Agrarian Reform
Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. 4267371; 454-2091 local 102
Only shortlisted applicants will be called for interview.

(Sgd.) DIR. NELSO G. GENITO
Director, Administrative Office
Executive Director, FAPSO

RAMCAR TECHNOLOGY, INC
URGENTLY NEEDS THE FOLLOWING:

MASTER ELECTRICIAN
- Male; 25-35 years old.
- A registered Electrical Engineer or Master Electrician.
- With at least 3-5 years actual experience in "electric motor rewinding".
- Must be knowledgeable in trouble shooting of electric motors
- Well-versed in using diagnostic and testing apparatus.

MOLD MAKERS
- Male, 25-35 years old; Technical course graduate.
- With 3-5 years experience as MOLD MAKER.

Note : Applicants for all positions must be willing to be based in Sta. Maria, Bulacan.

QUALIFIED APPLICANTS ARE REQUESTED TO APPLY PERSONALLY WITH THEIR RESUME AND 2X2 I.D. PICTURE TO:

CORPORATE RECRUITMENT SECTION
(BATTERY GROUP)
RAMCAR CENTER
80-82 Roces Avenue, Diliman, Q.C.
Tel. No. 4121779
or email to: **edvelas@motolite.com**

URGENTLY NEEDED

A Manila-based consultancy firm needs the following top-calibre professionals in the implementation of its domestic and overseas projects:

- **Project Managers**
- **Sr. Highway Engineers**
- **Sr. Pavement Engineers**
- **Sr. Structural/Bridge Engineers**
- **Sr. Drainage Engineers/Hydrologists**
- **Sr. Geodetic/Survey Engineers**
- **Sr. Geologists (Geohazards/Fault/Seismic)**
- **Sr. Civil/Geotechnical Engineers**
- **Sr. Civil/Soils/Materials Engineers**
- **Sr. Cost/Quantity Engineers**
- **Sr. Contract/Specifications Engineers**
- **Sr. Airport Planners**
- **Sr. Air Traffic Controllers**
- **Sr. Electronics & Communication Engineers (ECE)**
- **Sr. Navaid Specialists**
- **Sr. Water Supply/Sanitary Engineers**
- **Sr. Traffic Engineers**
- **Sr. River Engineers**
- **Sr. Transport Economists**
- **Sr. Development Economists**
- **Environmentalists**
- **GIS Specialists**
- **IT/Information Management Specialists**
- **Institutional Specialists**
- **Project Schedulers**
- **Jr. Civil Engineers**
- **CAD Operators**
- **Project Encoders/Accounting Clerks**

Sr. Engineers and Specialists must have a minimum of 15 years experience in their respective fields of expertise, while Jr. Civil Engineers, CAD Operators and Encoders must have at least 5 years experience preferably from consulting engineering firms:

Interested applicants may send their Curriculum Vitaé with (i) Brief Application Letter and contact telephone/cell phone no.; email & postal addresses; (ii) Education Certificates: BS, MS, PhD; (iii) Training and Seminar Certificates (as Training Leader, Resource Speaker, Participant); (iv) PRC Certificates and PRC ID Card (CE, GE, ECE); (v) Other Professional Accreditation e.g. Soils/Materials Engineers, and (vi) Certificates of Previous Employment to:

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Philippine Daily Inquirer
1098 Chino Roces Ave.
cor. Yague & Mascardo Sts., Makati City

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Kapitolyo , Pasig City

Tel no. 6389478 / Fax no. 6872861
Email address: creatives@beginnings.com.ph

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Please apply in person with Resumé from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Monday to Saturday) at MOSC Building, MIA Road corner Pildera 1 Street Brgy. Tambo, Parañaque City (In front of Caltex Park & Fly, near MIA Airport) Telephone Nos.: 853-7889 to 94
Look for Sharon / Lhan
Email: sharonguison@yahoo.com

Oxfam

Oxfam GB's purpose is to work with others to find lasting solutions to poverty and suffering

Oxfam Great Britain's Philippine Programme is offering an employment opportunity for

Response and Preparedness Coordinator

The Role

In line with Oxfam Great Britain's strategic plans and policy guidelines, Oxfam wishes to build its organizational capacity to continue to prepare and respond to disasters both natural and complex in the Philippines. Thus, the post will form a focal point for building capacities of the organization and its partners and networks. The role also includes being the deputy for the Humanitarian Programme Coordinator for response and preparedness.

The Key Responsibilities:

1) **Evolving Oxfam GB footprint in small and medium sized emergencies, focusing on public health programs and other priority areas.**
- Evolve and implement, together with stakeholders, public health programs in response and preparedness with focus on gender and marginalized groups.
- Organize and maintain a national pool of experts on public health.
- Build capacity of concerned government agencies promoting coordination and collaboration, especially in capacity building of sanitary engineers and water testing.
- Provide technical assistance and capacity building activities to partner agencies, government agencies and other non-government organizations for additional knowledge to the sector.

2) **Promotion of humanitarian standards and good practice**
- Organize and maintain a working group for NGOs, INGOs and Oxfam's partner organizations through the conduct of regular forums, dialogues, consultation meetings for information sharing on disaster preparedness and response – especially in cash programming and Public Health.
- Assist PO for Community Based Disaster Management in designing programs for the integration of disaster management in local development plans and programs in selected project sites
- Organize and consolidate a group of advocacy champions from various sectors, including the media and marginalized groups, to develop communication plans.
- Build capacity and evolve relationships through the promotion of good practice and guidelines, such as SPHERE, UNGPID, Planning, standard health messages, institutional capacity.
- Explore new types and tools for emergency response and preparedness.
- Formulate criteria for categorizing emergencies and methods of implementation
- Work with other POs in designing and conducting training programs and help facilitate in the development of materials in disaster preparation, mitigation and response.
- Develop and maintain systems for internal organizational administrative and logistical preparedness for emergency response

3) **Developing further Oxfam GB's contingency planning for large scale emergencies**
- Update, together with the humanitarian team, the OI contingency plan, as deemed necessary
- Based on researches conducted, work with the scientific communities, both from the academe and government warning agencies, in forecasting or building scenarios for large-scale emergencies.
- Incorporate and maintain learning in the contingency planning tool.

4) **Build training capacity in country**
- Complete training needs assessment involving stakeholders from all sectors.
- Work with key actors in building the training capacity in the Philippines.

5) **Response**
- Conduct, together with the assessment team, initial appraisal of the disaster situation and communicate immediate results to various stakeholders
- Develop response modalities in consultation with the HPC

Person Specification
- At least five years work experience with Humanitarian agency
- Have experience of humanitarian response, including field experience
- Excellent networking and facilitation skills
- Have a knowledge and understanding of the Philippine DM environment, its dynamics and operations
- Have a knowledge of the disaster situation in the Philippines including social, economic and political issues
- Have a knowledge and understanding of disaster management including emergency assessment, planning and implementation and a commitment to community based approaches
- Understanding of gender issues in development and commitment to promoting gender equality
- Knowledge and understanding of the mechanics and problems of programme implementation
- Experience in strategic and programme planning; skills and experience of monitoring; evaluation and appraisal
- Ability to work on his/her own initiatives to build on and develop the job, combined with the ability to work effectively as part of a team
- Fluency in written and spoken English
- Good oral and written communication skills and an ability to relate to people from all backgrounds
- Willingness to travel frequently, sometimes in remote areas for extended periods, to visit projects and partners

In addition, the following are highly desirable:
- A broad understanding of development issues at the national and international level
- Experience of community based disaster response and management
- Experience of working with government/officially mandated agencies for disaster preparedness and response
- Experience of work in gender issues, including e.g planning, training, research and organizing is highly desirable, specific gender related work in DM is an advantage
- Experience in RRA (Rapid Rural Appraisal) methods and ability to promote participatory processes

This is a fixed assignment for six (6) months. Interested applicants are encouraged to submit application letter and CV to:

The Human Resources and Administrative Officer
OXFAM GREAT BRITAIN
95-A Malumanay Street
Teacher's Village, Diliman, Quezon City 1101
FAX: 927-0499 email: etadeo@oxfam.org.uk

Deadline of application : 21 March 2007

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World Vision International

World Vision

A Christian relief and development organization, is setting up a global Financial Reporting Service Center (FRSC) and is currently looking for candidates who will fill the following positions:

Global Finance Consolidation Manager

Leading and managing the delivery and submissions of financial reports in compliance with audit requirements.

Qualities:
- Has an experience dealing w/ management level & external auditors
- Experience in SunSystems and Vision Reporting Tool (including designing reports using the tool)
- Advanced technical skills in using MS Excel, Powerpoint

Qualities helpful but not required:
- Experience in int'l/multi-currency environment
- NGO experience & w/ accounting/managing grants
- Skills as trainer and coach in cross-cultural context
- Experience working in Lotus Notes
- Ability to learn and use Monarch

Accountant/Finance Analyst (Spanish Speaking)

Will be doing analysis, compiling/consolidating of financial information; provide analysis and following up on inquiries; prepare analysis of financial reports; coordinate with Spanish speaking offices in Latin America.

Qualities:
- Has an experience as an Accountant or Financial Analyst
- Advanced technical skills in using MS Excel, Powerpoint
- Knowledgeable in SunSystems, Vision Report Writer
- Good technical finance background
- Fluency in Spanish is required

Qualities helpful but not required:
- Experience in int'l /multi-currency environment
- Knowledge in using business intelligence software
- NGO experience & with accounting/managing grants
- Skills as a trainer and coach in cross-cultural context
- Experience working in Lotus Notes
- Ability to learn and use Monarch

Assistant Finance Analyst

Will assist in data gathering, consolidation, and analysis of financial reports.

Qualities:
- Has an experience in consolidation and analysis of financial data
- Experience in SunSystems and Vision Report Writer
- Knowledgeable in MS Word, Excel
- Good communication skills

Qualities helpful but not required:
- Experience in Int'l /multi-currency environment
- NGO experience & w/ accounting/managing grants
- Experience working in Lotus Notes
- Ability to learn and use Monarch

Requirements necessary for all the positions:
- ❑ Bachelor's degree in Accounting, preferably CPA.
- ❑ Strong Christian commitment as evidenced by life & character.
- ❑ Flexibility and ability to work independently without significant supervision.
- ❑ Able to work in virtual/int'l environment dealing with clients & supervisor by phone, internet, Skype, etc.

Please send your CV by e-mail at **cristy_logronio@wvi.org** on or before March 16, 2007.
Only shortlisted candidates will be notified. Phone inquiries will not be entertained.

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INDUSTRIAL MARKET HEAD
- Male at least 40 years old
- Engineering graduate preferably in Metallurgical or Mechanical with professional license. Masteral studies/credits an advantage
- Minimum of 10 years related experience in selling and marketing of related construction products/materials. Preferably has working knowledge of coated steel application for general end products
- With experience in project handling and monitoring from conception to implementation
- A market/sales career person with high degree of professionalism, wide range of product knowledge, people-oriented and customer focused
- Good oral and written communication skills and must be computer literate

SALES MANAGERS – BUILDING PRODUCTS
- Male or female, at least 35 years old
- Civil Engineering, Architectural or Marketing graduate. MBA is an advantage
- Minimum of 5 years in managerial capacity in marketing of construction related products
- Must have established good networks with government agencies, real estate developers, contractors, engineers and architects
- Very strong leadership and motivational skills, articulate and can relate effectively at all levels of the organization
- Ability to manage an effective and customer service-oriented sales force
- Ability to speak Chinese is an advantage

SALES MANAGERS – DEALERS MARKET
- Male, Filipino-Chinese at least 35 years old, college degree holder
- Minimum of 10 years experience in selling construction materials to hardware stores. Familiarity with hardware store business is a **MUST**
- Ability to develop and manage efficient and effective customer service-oriented program
- Excellent communication skills in English and Chinese languages
- Willingness to travel all over the country is a **MUST**

Interested applicants should indicate the position applied for and may send their resumes through e-mail **cftimbal@philsteelgroup.com** or **corporatehrhead@yahoo.com** or send fax at 817-8133 or by mail or you may apply personally together with your transcript of records and 2x 2 picture at:

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- Willing to travel
- Must be a team player and possesses a good working attitude

Applicants may send their resumé with 2x2 picture and transcript of records to:

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or email their application to regine_evangelista@yahoo.com
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Are you ready to shift to another career?

Pointers on how to help you make the transition

By Ma. Esther Salcedo-Posadas
Contributor

AT SOME POINT IN YOUR life, you may come to the conclusion that you would like to explore another career path. You may be at a loss on how to go about such a major change. The most obvious question is whether you are sure about the jump that you are contemplating. If you have answered in the affirmative, following are some ideas on helping you make that transition:

Calculate the cost. All risk carries both cost and benefit. Making a career change will definitely have its consequences. It's important that you are well-aware of what you are getting yourself into so you can plan for it. For example, a lot of people have rushed head on into going on their own and starting a business only to end up bankrupt. Going into business is a good idea. It's the planning and implementation that is usually faulty.

Evaluate your tolerance for stress. You also need to ask yourself if you have the stamina to handle the pressures that may come from the change. Some people prefer predictability and anything that rocks their boat leads to stress.

Beyond economic rewards

Consider your talents and abilities. While a lot of things can be learned, you also have talents and aptitudes. You may choose a career change for financial reasons only to discover later that the new career is not within your interest. In the Philippines, some people are easily attracted to a call center career because of the financial rewards. Some of those who do get into the industry end up leaving soon enough because they failed to find career fulfillment. You have to remember that in choosing a career, it is pertinent to look beyond economic rewards.

Clear vision

Have a clear vision. You should be perfectly clear about your reasons for making a move. A goal that transcends your personal interests usually provides a good motivation for staying on the job. For example, some people are attracted to a career because of the added benefit of helping others in the community.

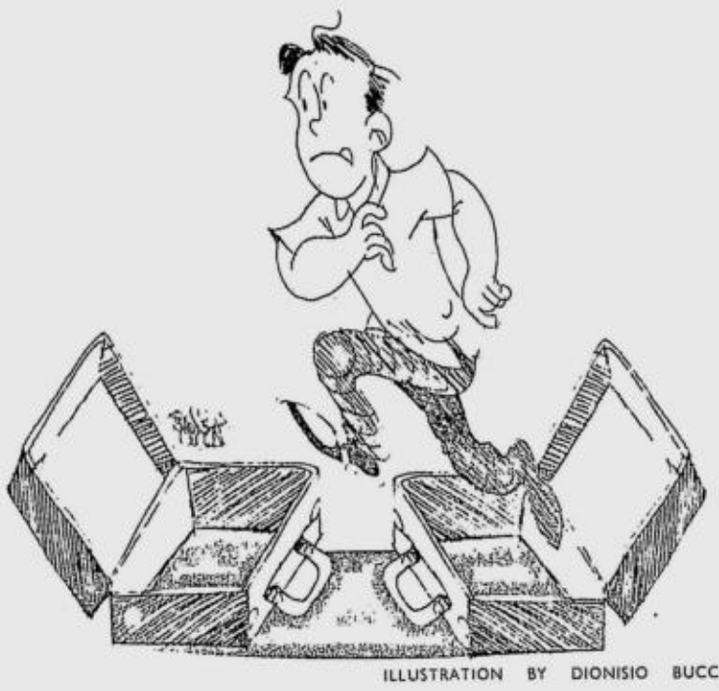


ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

Others work hard in certain professions with the desire to take care and provide for a family. Get to know yourself and discover your professional calling in life.

Decisiveness

Be decisive. Once you have made up your mind, do all you can to focus your energies on your new life. Be grateful for all the things you have learned along the way. If things did not turn out as expected, don't look back and waddle in self-pity. Learn from your experience and move on. Begin again if you must. Just remember to tread optimistically into your future. Life has much to offer to those who hold much faith and hope in their hearts.

(The author has worked as an executive search consultant and is involved in life-work planning issues.)

Office bullies and jerks

NEW YORK—FROM THE Hollywood producer who prompted hundreds of assistants to quit to the boss who forced employees to crawl on the floor, the destructive impact of workplace tyrants is costly but avoidable, says a top management expert in a new book. "The No Asshole Rule: Building a Civilized Workplace and Surviving One That Isn't" focuses attention on bad behavior on the job, beginning with its jarring title, said author Robert Sutton, professor of management science and engineering at Stanford University.

"I clearly did it for the shock value," he said in an interview. He quickly added the best reason for choosing the title was its authenticity.

Damage is expensive

"When I see somebody acting like that, I don't say, 'Oh, what a jerk,' " he said. "When I ask people, that tends to be the word they use." The problem is especially pronounced in companies with wide pay discrepancies and a visible "star" system, he said.

But the damage caused by bad behavior in the workplace is expensive, whether from turnover, damage to a company's reputation, retaliation by colleagues or loss of productivity, Sutton said in the book, published by the Warner Business Books unit of Hachette Book Group USA.

For example, the head of a large corporation once sent an e-mail threatening retribution if more employees did not work on weekends, he said. The e-mail was leaked to the Internet, and the company stock dropped 22 percent in three days.

ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

Sutton offers a system to calculate the detrimental cost of such people and suggests it can run as high as $750,000 a year for a typical organization with 1,000 people.

Causing the problem are people who leave others feeling humiliated and deenergized, who aim their venom at people less powerful and employ tactics such as public shaming or treating others as if they are invisible.

Companies that constantly rate employees, creating a few stars and an abundance of lower-class workers, breed bad behavior, which is contagious. Tyrants hire like-minded people, and people around them imitate their behavior, he said.

Communicable disease

"View acting like an asshole as a communicable disease," he wrote. "Once you unleash disdain, anger and contempt, or someone unleashes it on you, it spreads like wildfire." Even the smallest bit of power can prove dangerous. Sutton noted a study of several small groups in which one member in each group was put in a position of evaluating others, while seated near a plate of cookies. Within minutes, the group members with more power were more likely to take a second cookie, chew with their mouths open and spread crumbs on their faces and the table.

Companies with big discrepancies in pay between top and bottom tend to create more workers who behave badly, he wrote.

"The odds are you're going to start acting like those people and, even if it doesn't happen, it's going to have bad effects on your physical and mental health," he said.

Sutton suggests companies not only adopt a "no jerks rule" in hiring and firing practices but apply it to clients and customers. Train workers in "constructive confrontation" to resolve conflict, treat misbehavior as incompetence and downplay unnecessary status differences among employees.

Indifference

Or adopt the "one-asshole rule," which leaves a lone reverse role model as a reminder of what constitutes poor behavior, Sutton wrote.

He also suggests employees use indifference and emotional detachment to cope. "The best thing for your mental health is to be emotionally disengaged and learn not to care," he said.

But, he added, be careful about such coping mechanisms.

"They might provide just enough protection ... to stop people from bailing out of relentlessly demeaning situations—even when they have exit options," he wrote.

Reuters

BPO school announces medical transcription course

BPO TRAINING ACADEMY, an institution in the business process outsourcing industry announces the ongoing enrolment for its Medical Transcription Course which starts in April. The course will feature health care documentation, medical science and professional practice plus English proficiency and computer essentials. Medical transcription is one of the fastest-growing technical courses in the country. A progressive field under the BPO industry, it has generated billions of dollars worldwide and has helped Filipinos find employment here and abroad in the last few years. BPO Training Academy's Medical Transcription Course is offered to both allied and non-allied health graduates and will be handled by highly qualified educators and medical doctors.

BPO Training Academy started operations last year with a program called 100-hour Finishing Course for Call Center Agents.

For queries, call 536-8834, 450-1802 and 524-9461 or text 09166588888.

Gospel: Luke 13: 1-9
But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!

Spirit of repentance

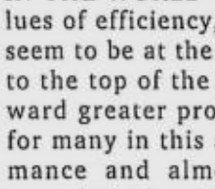
By Bishop Precioso D. Cantillas, SDB, DD

IN THE WORLD OF BUSINESS AND WORK, THE values of efficiency, productivity, excellence and success seem to be at the very core of everyone's being. Racing to the top of the ladder of success or driving hard toward greater profits are the strong motivating forces for many in this arena. The focus on excellent performance and almost-perfect work conditions would seem to just put aside repentance—a feeling of sorrow or regret for failures and mistakes—in the hearts of workers and businessmen; a zero tolerance for even the slightest deviation from the planned target would be a compulsive option.

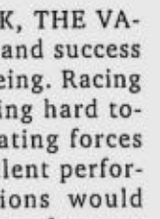
Thus, the "culture of perfection" which seems to pervade in work and business is one that would somehow negate the reality of imperfections and sinfulness which abound in our human experience and which Jesus likewise reminds us of and even invites us all to repent from or else we would all perish.

Being aware of mistakes and failures committed knowingly or unknowingly at work or in business could make us more human—understanding of the human situation laden with weaknesses and deficiencies. The awareness of our transgressions could lead us to true repentance and would also drive us to conversion which would in turn make us strive intensely for perfection and not just hypocritically maintain a mere "image" of it.

The spirit of repentance therefore would not necessarily be counterproductive in work and business; rather, it could promote authentic productivity which includes the value of truth and truthfulness in spite of human frailties, and which would also rely on the mercy and forgiveness of the Lord and Savior of all. *(E-mail the author at mfvg@skyinet.net)*



REFLECTIONS FOR THE WORKING SOUL



You know what to do

By Teresa R. Tunay, OCDS

"IF YOU DO NOT REPENT ... YOU WILL PERISH ...!" How relevant these words are in the workplace! To "perish" in your work may mean losing your job, being bypassed at promotion time and being "overlooked" when merit pay increases are up. It could even mean being underemployed in a sense, when even what you're paid to do is no longer entrusted to you—all those situations are tantamount to dying (perishing) because they tell you that you have no more room for growth, and growth is a sign of life. For a person who follows Jesus in earnest, even such "death" situations in the workplace can be reversed—by repentance.

Repentance at the workplace is a sign of maturity; it means owning responsibility for your deeds and decisions—one of the keys to job satisfaction. It's fatal to think that all our dissatisfactions at work are caused by other people. If we look hard enough, with humility and a readiness to learn from our mistakes, we will discover that all our miseries at work, one way or another, find their root in our attitudes.

Piolo is a bright junior executive, but he flits from job to job, leaving a trail of wonderful but half-finished projects. His former bosses have a common observation of Piolo: "He's almost brilliant, *magaling sana, pero...*" He's almost brilliant, but... and that "but" is due to Piolo's blind side, that which does not see his culpability in his work.

When things fall short of his expectations, he's quick to see others' shortcomings but not his. Thus, Piolo is unrepentant, and if he doesn't wake up his career will soon die a natural death. If today you recognize Piolo within you, you know what to do. There is still time. *(E-mail the author at teresa_de_manila@yahoo.com)*

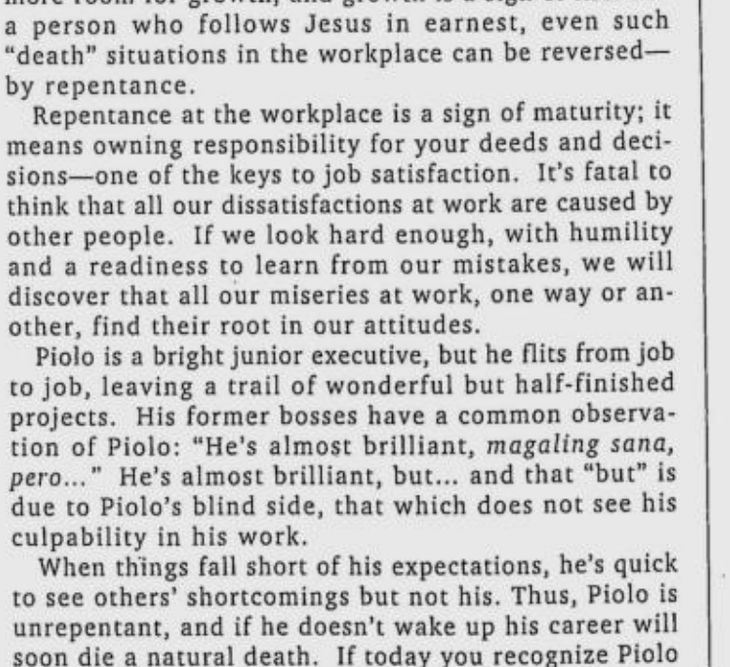


ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

BAHAGINAN

A **Member** of the **VSO Federation**, an international organization that works through volunteers, is currently looking for the following ***staff*** positions on a one-year fixed term contract:

1. **INTERNATIONAL PLACEMENT MANAGER (Job Code: IPM)**

VSO aims to support disadvantaged people in fulfilling their rights to physical, mental and social wellbeing and to good quality essential service in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. The post will be responsible for ensuring the delivery of international volunteers for placements requiring professionals. The IPM will also support the development of existing and new programmes in countries where VSO operates.

Key Responsibilities:

1. **Manage the performance of an international placement team vis-à-vis the volunteer delivery agenda.**
   - Convene regular and special meetings (often by telephone) with key stakeholders from VSO offices in Canada, Kenya, Netherlands, Philippines, United Kingdom, India, Ireland and VSO Programme Offices in several developing countries to discuss fill-rates, strategies for filling hard-to-fill placements, ongoing trends or problems in programme areas.
   - Provide technical advise and support to VSO Programme Offices that are developing new programmes.
   - Oversee international team working and matching, ensuring that matching systems are in place and processes are observed and act as a final arbiter when needed in matching negotiations.
2. **Manage the supply and demand of volunteers**
   - Provide an overview of global demand and supply of volunteers and liaise with International Marketing on global recruitment needs
   - Lead the formulation of strategies to sustain the delivery of volunteers and meet the target fill-in rates for VSO programme areas, i.e. health, disability and HIV & AIDs, secure livelihoods, participation and governance, and education.
3. **Take the lead in building new resource partnerships with institutions and organizations in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific for promoting international volunteering and sourcing volunteers**
4. **To work closely with relevant international working groups to develop and strengthen the health goal sector within VSO.**

Essential Qualifications
- At least 3 years experience of managing and developing diverse/virtual teams in an international context, ensuring successful performance in achieving targets
- At least 3 years experience in programme development and management in the development sector where there is demonstrated ability to identify and analyze ideas and opportunities and translate them into practical plans for action
- At least 2 years experience in working in a multi-cultural environment or international organization
- Excellent oral and written communication skills and very good command of English
- Excellent interpersonal, facilitation and negotiation skills
- Above average skills in word processing, spreadsheet and database computer applications
- Ability to travel and work outside of office hours

Deadline for Submission of Application: March 23, 2007
Interview Date: March 29, 2007
Post Starts: May 16, 2007 (preferably)

2. **VOLUNTEER AND PROGRAMME ADVISER (Job Code: VPA)**

The Volunteer and Programme Adviser will be responsible for ensuring that quality volunteers are recruited, selected and matched to appropriate placements overseas. He/She will contribute and participate in planning and implementing recruitment actions and strategies, as well as contribute to the development of an effective international volunteer management system.

Key Responsibilities:

1. **Team Working**
   - Work effectively with key stakeholders, including other departments in VSO and external organizations, to ensure that team targets and objectives are successfully met.
   - Contribute to corporate strategic planning and objective setting, and in the delivery of different types of volunteering, including long-term, short-term and youth volunteering.
2. **Recruitment**
   - Undertake volunteer recruitment activities and manage a volunteer caseload in accordance with agreed protocols.
   - Responsible for a caseload of placements and for working with International Programme Offices and other departments in VSO to maximize the number of volunteers taking up these overseas placements.
   - Develop and maintain a good overview of current and upcoming trends in supply (volunteers) and demand (placement)
3. **Assessment and Training**
   - Conduct a variety of activities in order to assess skills, personal circumstances and qualities of applicants and volunteers during the recruitment, assessment and matching processes.
4. **Customer Service**
   - Deal with requests for information and advice from inquirers, volunteers, and staff within VSO and offer support as appropriate.
   - Maintain quality standards for recording information and data inputting.

Essential Qualifications
- Minimum 2 years professional experience in human resource management including recruitment, selection, benefits administration; experience in working with voluntary sector is an advantage
- Minimum 2 years professional experience in implementing or supervising development projects in at least one of the following areas: community development, education, health, natural resources management, small business enterprises
- Excellent oral and written communication skills and very good command of English
- Above average skills in word processing, spreadsheet and database computer applications
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Ability to travel and work outside of office hours

Deadline for Submission of Application: March 23, 2007
Interview Date: To be announced
Post Starts: May 16, 2007 (preferably)

Interested applicants should access a job pack from the VSO Bahaginan website at **www.vsobahaginan.org.ph.** CVs will not be accepted as applications. Applicants must accomplish the VSO Staff Application Form, which can be downloaded from the VSO Bahaginan website. All applicants should also write an explanatory note (no longer than two paragraphs totaling to 6-8 sentences) for each of the above essential qualifications, explaining why you believe you possess the qualities required for the post. Failure to send explanatory notes will disqualify the applicant. Please send accomplished form and specify the **Job Code** to: **The Director** at **bahaginan@vsoint.org**

VSO Bahaginan is an equal opportunity employer. Because of our limited resources, **only shortlisted candidates will be notified.**

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- College Graduate
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Outbound Program Manager

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PHILSTEEL HOLDINGS CORPORATION

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The PHILSTEEL HOLDINGS CORPORATION is a company dedicated to raising the Filipino's quality of life by helping raise the quality of the country's flat and rollformed steel products to world-class standards. Together with its member company, STEEL.CORP, our Group is in need of high caliber, assertive and result-oriented professionals to join its management team to increase and maximize its production output.

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Responsible for sustaining high-level performance of the mechanical and control system technologies of the mill, processes and support systems. Knowledgeable in the operation and design as well as can interpret drawings and specification of industrial processes, mechanical drive trains, pneumatic/ hydraulic/lubrication/furnace and industrial heating systems. Sound troubleshooting skill and able to work under pressure. Candidate must be Mechanical Engineering graduate with minimum of ten (10) years work experience, minimum of 5 years experience in supervising field technical personnel. Computer literate and can operate Auto Cad.

MECHANICAL SYSTEMS TECHNICIANS

Knowledgeable in the operation as well as can interpret technical drawings and specification of mechanical processes, mechanical drive trains and pneumatic/ hydraulic/ lubrication/furnace. Able to work under pressure. Candidate must be Mechanical Engineering or Industrial Technician graduate with minimum of five (5) years work experience. Computer literate and can operate Auto Cad.

MECHANICAL TECHNICIANS

Candidate will be responsible for the mechanical works involving hydraulics, pneumatics equipment, heavy gear drive trains, pumps and blowers, FRP & PVC piping systems, air compressors, heat exchanges and acid pumps. Must be a graduate of mechanical engineering or automotive technology or Mechanical Engineering. Must be familiar with steel works machineries and/or similar equipment used in the paper mill and aluminum industry is an advantage. With at least three (3) years work experience and hands-on technician job. Able to work under pressure.

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7th Floor, Philsteel Tower, 140 Amorsolo Street
Legaspi Village, Makati City
Tel. No. 813-8382

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We are looking for a full time Home Therapist, male preferred, for our 9-year-old son diagnosed with PDD-NOS. Candidate must have experience working with children with autism. Trained in the area of Speech Therapy, ABA or Special Education, willing to travel.
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Email address: hireteams@globelines.com.ph

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SECRETARY – Female; not more than 35 years old; with at least 1 year related work experience; with good communication skills; To be assigned in Quezon City

OPERATIONS MANAGER – Male; 35-45 years old; with experience in Audit & Banking; To be assigned in Quezon City.

ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT – Male/Female; not more than 35 years old; preferably 1 year experience in the same field.

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Interested applicants may e-mail resumes and portfolios to **careeropp@espressodesign.biz**.

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FINANCE MANAGER (1 pax)
COST & PROPERTY CONTROLLER (1 pax)
IT MANAGER (1 pax)
MARKETING ASSISTANT (1 pax)
HOUSEKEEPING SUPERVISOR (1 pax)
ACCOUNTING CLERKS (2 pax)
RECEPTIONISTS/TELEPHONE OPERATORS (4 pax)
FOOD & BEVERAGE STAFF (18 pax)
MASSAGE ATTENDANT (4 pax)
DRIVERS (2 pax)
CHEFS/COOKS

Interested applicants may come in business attire to the Human Resources Division every Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 am – 12:00 nn or email their resumés (no attachments please) to **lcborlongan@tagaytayhighlands.com** or **recruitment@tagaytayhighlands.com**. For inquiries you may call HRD at (046) 4830848 or (02) 8190956 and look for Lita, Daphne or Zy. We will respond only to qualified applicants.

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Knowledge of medico marketing and sales process would be an advantage

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Interested applicants may email their CV's to gokhale.s@bharatserums.com Interviews will be scheduled in March at our below mentioned Manila office
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4. Good appearance and Physically fit.
5. Height not less than 160 cm and weight proportionate to height.

Documents required are as follows:

1. Copy of valid passport at least for one year.
2. Copy of High School Certificate - 12 years.
3. Copy of previous experience certificate if any.
4. Two recent color photos + 1 photo standing position.
5. Detailed Resume or Curriculum Vitae

All candidates will undergo Written and Oral English Test followed by Online test and Interview in Manila. Successful candidates will attend a course in Kuwait during Training and will be paid full allowance, free accommodation and transportation. Interested candidates should forward their applications within 10 days from date of advertisement to:

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3 Floor Rm.301-302 Eastgate Center, 169 EDSA, Mandaluyong City
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1. OFFICE ENGINEERING HEAD
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2. PROJECT MANAGER & PROJECT ENGINEER
A Civil Engineer with a min. of 5 years experience for Proj Manager and 3 years experience for Proj. Engineer in actual construction of horizontal & vertical project. Has proven ability in negotiation with client & subcontractor. Has strong organizational leadership and management skills. Has ability to communicate and interact with a number of personnel in all levels. Proficient in documentation, verbal and written communication skills. Must be computer literate, particularly in MS Word & Excel.

3. TECHNICAL / ENGINEERING SECRETARY
Competent in spreadsheet and word processing software. Has the knowledge in the preparation of Company Profile and Prequalification Documents in the preparation of tender documents for bidding.

Interested applicants may send their resumé & credentials in person with 2x2 colored photo to:

No. 35 Don Jose South St.,
Don Antonio Hts., Q.C.
Tel. No. 952-7884 or 952-7553 look for Glo.
e-mail : **ce_padilla@yahoo.com**

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Contact No.:
811-6139 to 44

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4. **Secretary**
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6. **Web Developer**
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8. **Video Editor**

pls. submit resumé / biodata to the address below:

H2O Republic Inc.
Unit 2401 24/F 139 Corporate Center
Valero St., Salcedo Village
Makati City, Philippines 1227
Tel: +632 817 5729 Fax: +632 817 0832
Email: h2orepublic@gmail.com

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Synnex buys all L2S shares in Eastwood

SYNNEX CORP, A GLOBAL IT SUPply chain services company formally announced it has bought all the shares of Link2support Inc (L2S), a knowledge process outsourcing and contact center company in Eastwood City, Manila (Philippines).

In a recent press conference, Synnex vice president Christopher Caldwell said that his company which is based in Fremont, California had signed a definitive agreement with L2S, a contact center servicing mainly American clients of voice, email and technical support.

"The L2S acquisition is consistent with our strategy to broaden our integrated solutions offering and increases our call center expertise with a world-class technical support organization focused on the IT and electronics markets," Caldwell told the Inquirer.

He, however, refused to give figures as to how much Synnex had gotten L2S saying that the purchase price will only be available by the end of March, when the company will be done with its corporate earnings auditing.

Synnex targeted L2S as a complementary acquisition based on L2S's breadth and depth of knowledge within the contact center industry. L2S is the first company acquired by Synnex in Manila, the reporters were told.

For his part, Link2Support general manager Vincent Fan said that joining Synnex "will generate a host of new global business opportunities for L2S to expand into new industries while continuing to provide world-class technical support and value-added services."

With the acquisition, international visibility is also expected of L2S and could place it in the global outsourcing arena.

For the record, the Eastwood City site serves as L2S' headquarters with more than 2,000 employees handling accounts that deal mainly with IT and networking.

While L2S currently has 600 job seats in Manila, 580 in Cagayan de Oro and 300 in Davao, Fan promised that with L2S's acquisition will come expansion.

"More job opportunities will come under way. We already have four areas to choose from for our fourth site in the Philippines," Caldwell said.

The next site, Caldwell said, could come from one of Luzon provinces and expected to generate approximately 300-500 available seats for qualified workers.

"Your country has a good English-speaking labor force, even better than India. Your technical support has already outgrown (that of India)," Caldwell told the Inquirer.

"We look at Philippines as having very good source of labor that will allow the growth of the industry in the years to come," Caldwell said when pressed for his comments on the future of contact centers in the country. Asked of their commercial secrets, Fan said that L2S has three principles in considering in setting up and looking for a good business site. The three "basic secrets" he enumerated were: 1. visa registered, 2. the people and 3. competition.

After nearly five years of providing technical support services to clients across the globe, L2S developed into a company that is recognized because of its highly-skilled and technically-equipped employees and its state-of-the-art facilities. With excellent skills training and a career development program, the company became an attractive employer to engineering graduates and IT practitioners.

Synnex Corp offers a comprehensive range of services to original equipment manufacturers, software publishers and reseller customers worldwide.

Founded in 1980, Synnex, which has bases in China, Mexico and India among others, also offers product distribution, related logistics services, demand generation marketing and contract assembly and works with the leading industry suppliers of IT systems, peripherals, system components, software and networking equipment.

Graduating studes attend job hunting confab

"THERE IS NO SECURity in life, there is only opportunity", emphasized Jesse Francis Rebustillo, Philippine Daily Inquirer Classified ads head, guest speaker during a seminar held recently at Subic Bay Arts Center, Subic Bay Freeport Zone.

The seminar entitled, "Yes! Graduate *na ako! Handa na ba ako*?" was held to assist students prepare themselves for job hunting.

More than 500 graduating students from the different colleges in Zambales and Olongapo City attended the whole day seminar organized by the Human Resources Department of Mondriaan Aura College, People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) Subic Chapter, Subic Bay Workforce Development Foundation Inc., (SBWDFI) and Olongapo –Zambales Association of Private Technical Institutions (OZAPTI).

"In choosing a career, one must seek the advice of family and friends. Listen to the teachers and career advisers and most of all listen to yourself ", added Rebustillo.

"You could check the classified ads sections, ask referrals from friends, attend job fairs, read business sections of newspapers and browse the web in job searching", he said.

Rebustillo who started his talk with a prayer discussed about how to write a winning resume, the preparation of pre-employment requirements, values, attitude, career, and success.

"Collect basic information, look good and feel good during the interview, prepare all the needed documents, review your own resume and practice for the interview", he concluded.

SBMA Labor and Employment Head, lawyer Severo Pastor, Jr. discussed the opportunities of employment in the Subic Bay Freeport Zone while Representative Mitos Magsaysay of the first district of Zambales encouraged the students to be at their best when they are searching for jobs and love their work when they are already employed.

The seminar was co-sponsored by Jobstreet.com, Globe Telecom and Informatics University.

Phil-Jobnet System assures registration of HEIs graduates

THE ESTIMATED 500,000 annual graduates of various skills and courses in the country's 1,647 higher educational institutions (HEIs) will have a ready access to employment opportunities by virtue of their inclusion in the computerized Phil-JobNet System of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

This became a reality as Labor and Employment Secretary Arturo D. Brion and Chair Carlito S. Puno of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), jointly forged an accord recently ensuring, for the first time, the registration of the graduates of the 1,647 HEIs to the Phil-JobNet.

The Phil-Jobnet System is DOLE's computerized jobs and skills matching system accessible on a 24/7 basis in the Internet. It functions as the country's basic Labor Market Information (LMI) system under the supervision of the DOLE's Bureau of Local Employment, and is

SEE PHIL-JOBNET/P. 6

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Must possess the following:
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Interested applicants may apply at:
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Tel. No. 887-7888
OR E-mail your resumé with 2x2 picture at hug.info@gmail.com

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Mail : P.O. Box 1472, Makati City

Mind maps Guru to unleash creativity in Manila

BUZAN

FROM THE COMPANY THAT brought you world-class speakers like William Rothwell, author of Strategic Development of Talent, and Jack Canfield, author of Chicken Soup for the Soul, ITD Consulting Group now presents to you their first offering for the year 2007. Tony Buzan, the world's leading author on the brain and learning, will be coming here in Manila to share how to release our inner creativity in the ITD-Buzan Mega Guru Event. In this 2-day Transformational Workshop, Buzan will teach Filipinos how to enhance their creative intelligence and use it for both personal and professional gain.

True to the Mega Guru Event's topic, "Unleash the Genius of Creativity and Innovation for a Competitive Edge", the world's top guru on mind power and creative thinking promises that he will impart to all the attendees the secrets of using mind power. Through these secrets they will be able to unleash fluency, flexibility and originality of thought that enables infinite creativity and innovation in your work and life.

Tony Buzan is the originator of Mind Maps® and the concept of Mental Literacy. Buzan's books and other products have achieved massive success in more than 100 countries and 30 languages, generating revenues in excess of £100 million. Tagged as the Mind Magician, Buzan has lectured to audiences ranging from 5-year old kindergarten children through disadvantaged students to first class graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, to the world's top business directors, and to the leading organizations and governments.

The Ballroom of the Mandarin Oriental Manila will be the venue for the March 26 and 27 ITD-Buzan Mega Guru Event. Register now and avail of early bird rates. For details, please call ITD Consulting at 887-7428, email itdmanila@itd.com.my or visit www.itd.com.my.

BETTER HERBS, INC.
(Neutraceutical and Personal Care)
Our company has an immediate requirement for the following positions:

SALES AND MARKETING OFFICER
- Male or Female, 25-40 years old
- Graduate or Marketing or any business related course from a reputable college/University is a plus but not required
- With product/brand management experience
- With above average communication, negotiation, and computer application skills
- With leadership qualities, flexible, creative, resourceful and can adapt to fast phase working environment

ACCOUNTING CLERK
- Female, 22-35 years old
- Preferably accounting graduate
- With background experience in accounting
- With above average computer skills and good in oral/written communication
- Can work under minimum supervision

PHARMACIST
- Female, 30 years old below
- Must be licensed
- Can work under minimum supervision
- Honest and hardworking

SKIN THERAPISTS AND MASSAGE THERAPISTS
- 21-30 years old
- Background or previous experience in a skin clinic and spa is a plus
- Willing to be trained
- For skin therapists, candidate must be at least college in a medical or health related course
- For massage therapists, candidate must be at least high school graduate
- Honest and hardworking

FRONT DESK/CASHIER
- Female, 20-30 years old
- Able to speak English and Chinese (Fookien) Mandarin a plus
- Graduate of any 4-year college degree
- With above average computer skills and good in oral/written communication

**All applicants must have a pleasing personality with clear skin.*

Interested applicants may send their resumé (state desired position) at Suite 904 Atlanta Centre, #31 Annapolis Street, Greenhills, San Juan, M.M. You can also send it thru email betterherbs5@meridian.ph or you may call us at 723-4376/727-5846/721-4376 and look for Ms. Ivy

PHILIPPINE MINING GROUP and HOLDINGS, INC
A newly established Company composed of Filipino and Foreign incorporators with a branch office at Beijing, Peoples Republic of China is in need of:

a. GEOLOGISTS
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- ✓ With working experience in HRD
- ✓ Knowledgeable in pertinent Labor Laws

c. ACCOUNTING OFFICER
- ✓ 3 to 5 years accounting experience
- ✓ Can prepare necessary reports to BIR, etc
- ✓ Familiar with bank transactions

d. EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
- ✓ Female with pleasing personality
- ✓ With experience in high profile environment

e. INTERPRETER
- ✓ Can speak, read and write Chinese Mandarin
- ✓ Familiar with the use of Chinese software

f. OFFICE ASSISTANT
- ✓ Personable female at least 23 y/o
- ✓ With experience in over-all office functions

g. DRIVER/MESSENGER
- ✓ With valid Professional Driver's License
- ✓ Can drive cars and vans
- ✓ Familiar with Manila and provincial routes
- ✓ Knowledge in troubleshooting preferred

Notes:
1. Applicants from items a to f must be computer literate, preferably with valid Driver's License and willing to do field work and assignments.
2. Qualified applicants may send their application letter and resume' with:
   - latest 2'X2' colored I.D. picture
   - contact number/s, and
   - desired salary

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- With excellent communication skills
- Can work under pressure
- With considerable work experience

Qualified applicants will be hired ASAP. Resumé can be sent online at recruitment@mme.ph and walk-ins can drop by at MME Corporate Centre, # 108 Tordesillas St. corner Gallardo St., Salcedo Village, Makati City. Or call 812-7108 loc. 1110 or look for Ritchie (0922-4968082).

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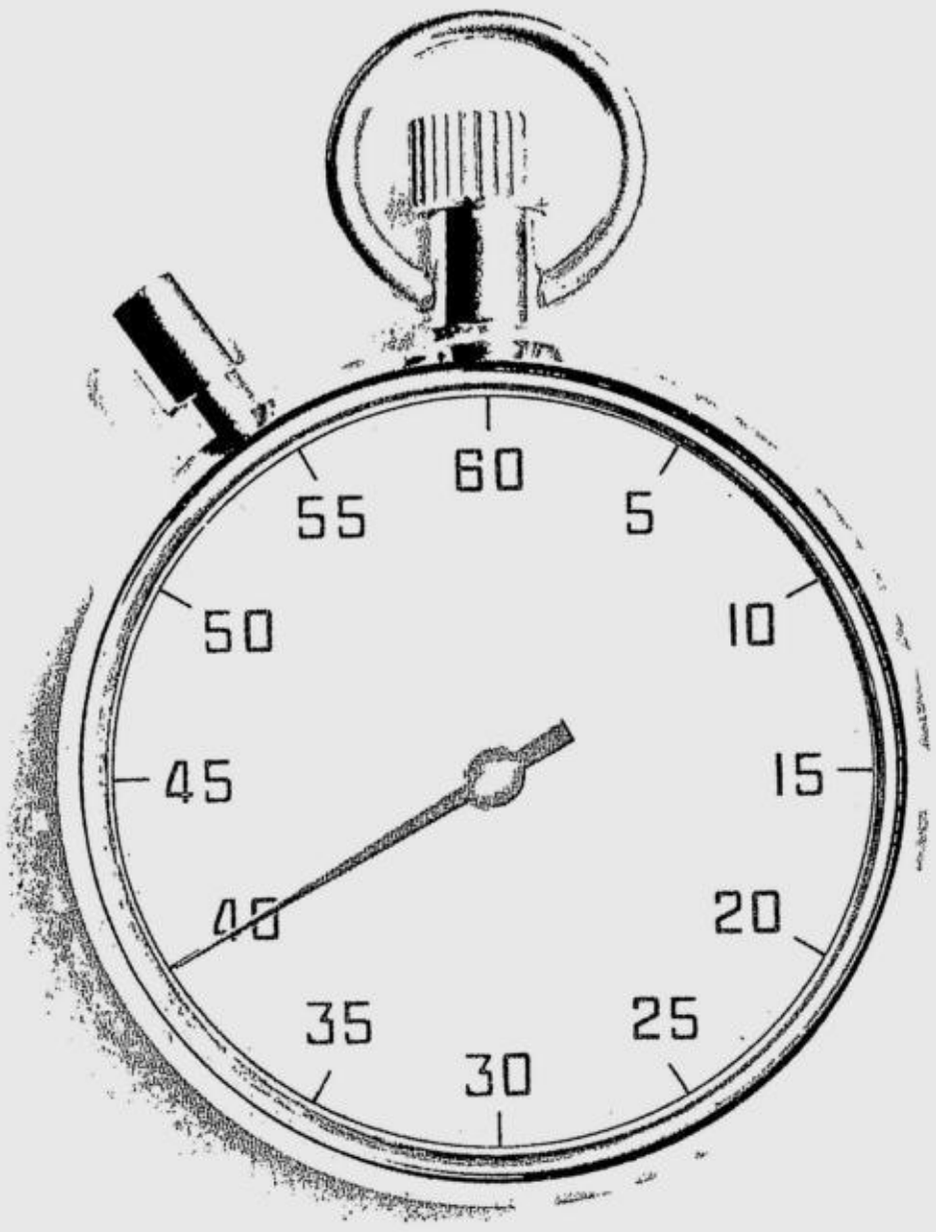

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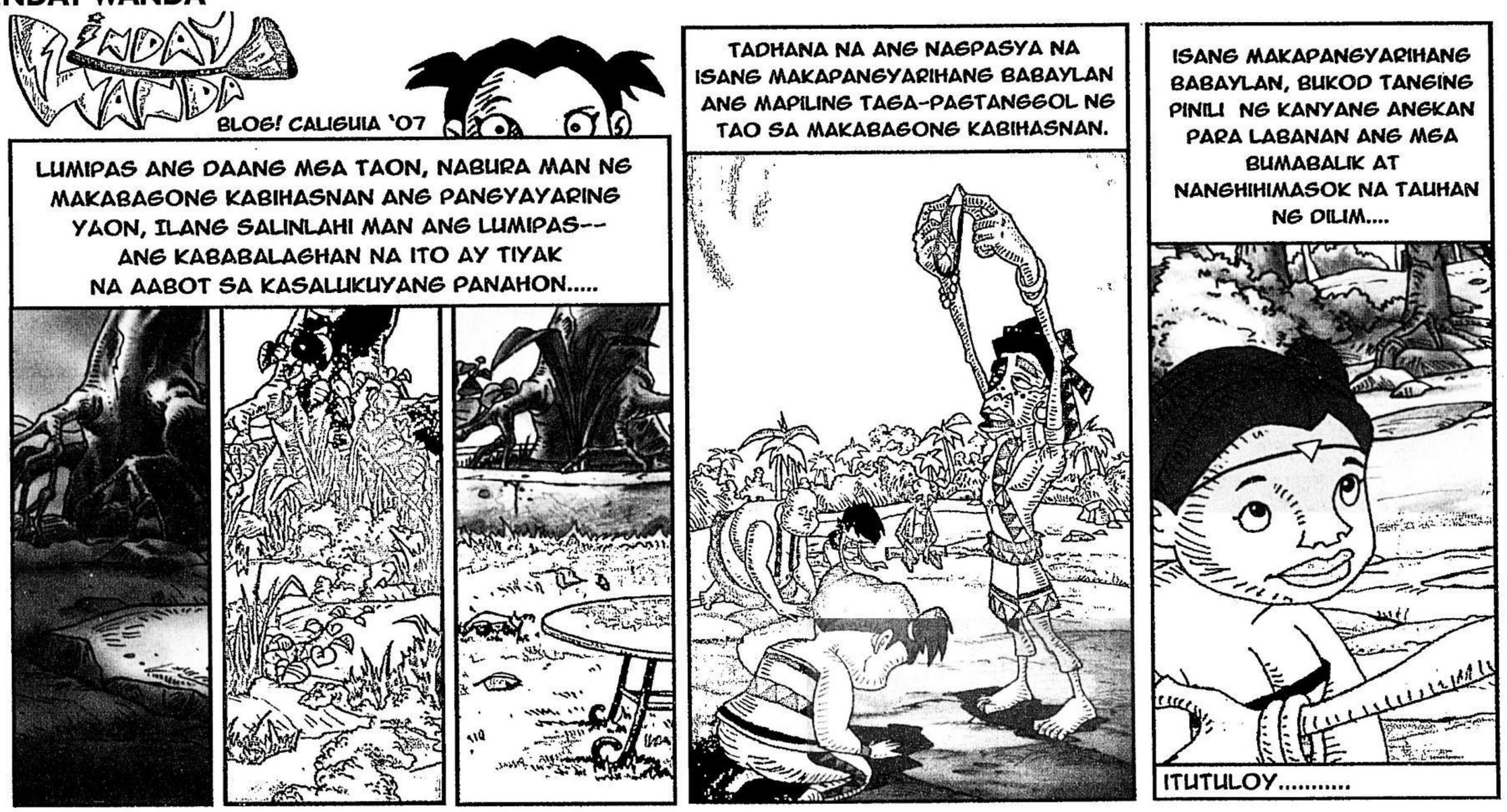

LEAVES OF GLAZ

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GIRL POWER MANGO JAM

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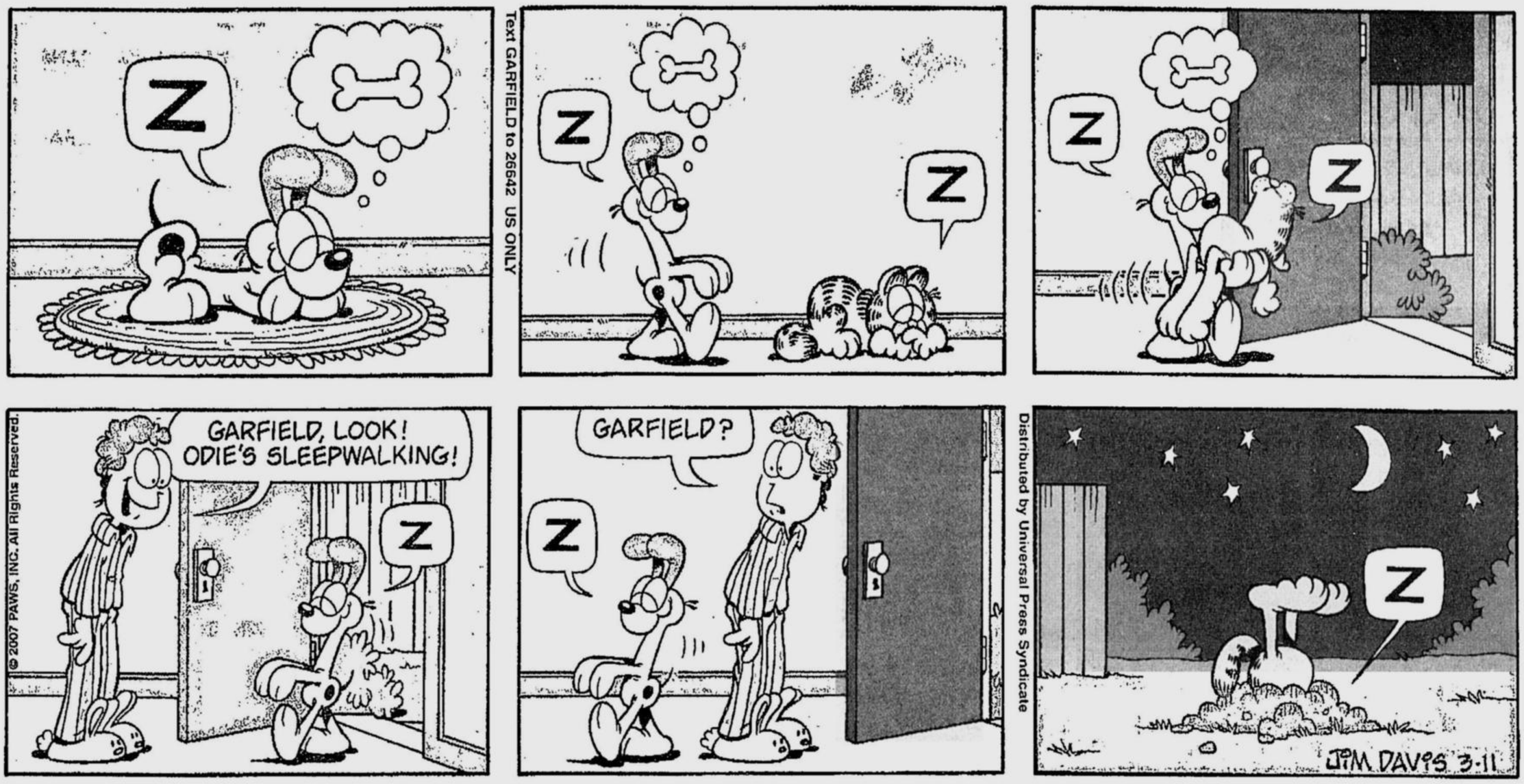

FULL HOUSE

BY STEPH BRAVO

sunday INQUIRER magazine

March 11, 2007

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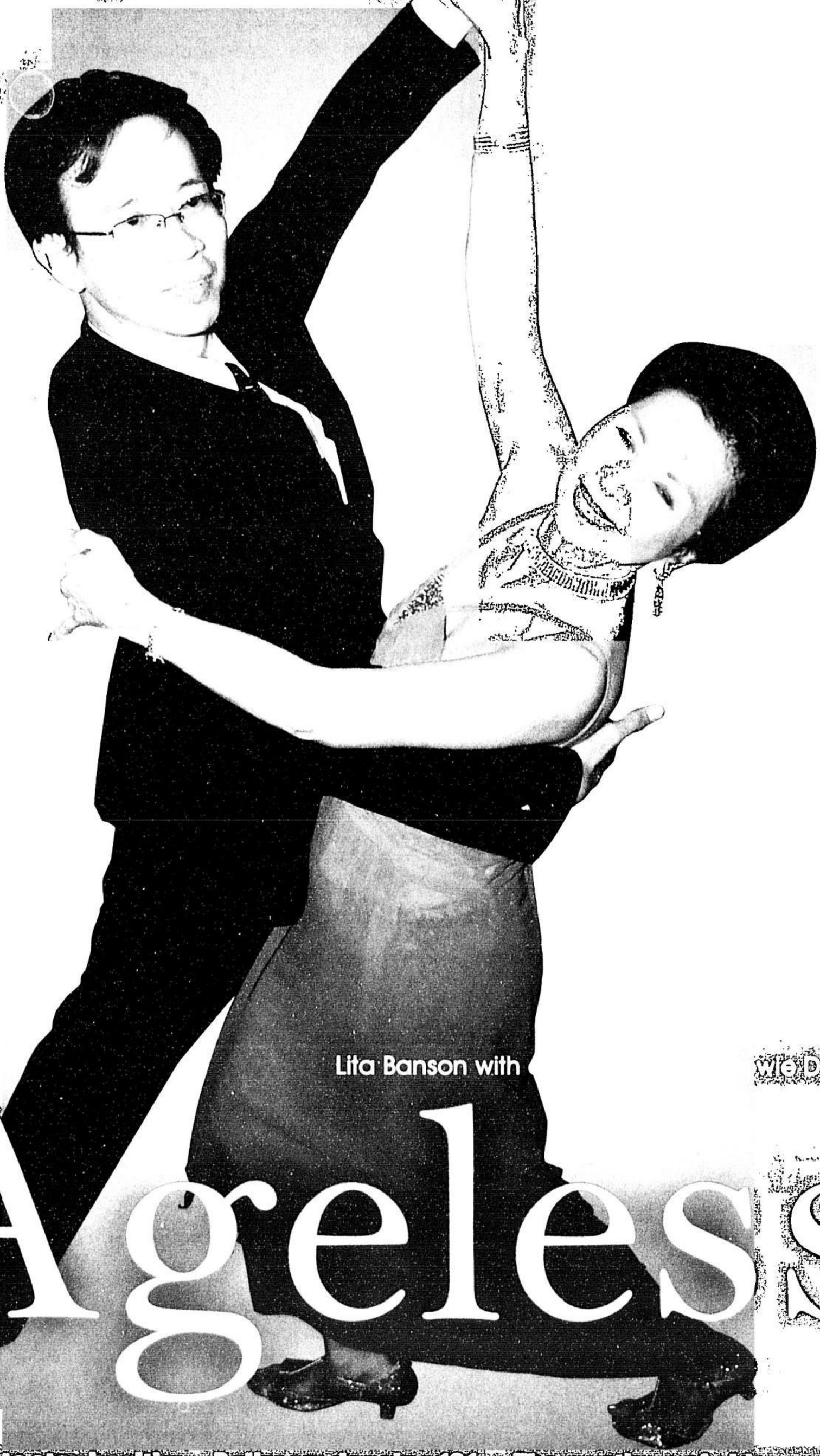

Lita Banson with Wil Dasilo

Ageless

plus 5 ways to stay healthy • Ballroom dancing 101 • The mystique of older women • moral

Browser

By Leica R. Carpo

Truly skin deep

A recent L'Oreal study on the skin of 200 Asian females aged 20 to 70 confirms our worst fears: the passing years are writ large on our face, and larger on our skin

THAT time marches on winged feet is nowhere more obvious than inside a woman's vanity kit which, as the years go by, starts to resemble a witch's cauldron and a chemical lab. These days, anti-wrinkle cream ingredients are no longer limited to the vitamin C, B, E of yesteryears but have entered the realm of the exotic, even the bizarre, with the likes of Origin's Youthopia (which uses Rhodiola rosea a.k.a. golden root, a rare plant found only in the Siberian mountains), Guerlain's Blue Cedar sap, or even Shu Uemura's Deep Sea water which is mined 320 meters below the ocean bed.

Spending big bucks and generating mega fuss to temporarily blur a few lines, even out skin tone and regain a youthful glow may just be postponing the inevitable, but for the billion-dollar beauty industry and millions of hopeful women over 25, the quest for effective anti-aging products might as well be the Holy Grail: you just have to keep the faith.

Aside from the biological signs of aging, other factors such as genetics, climate, stress level, pollution, smoking, diet, lifestyle, the sun and even air conditioning can contribute to wrinkles and sagging skin. French plastic surgeon Dr. Cedric Kron in the same L'Oreal study says that changes in Asian women's facial skin are relatively slight until 40 years old, but that "significant evolutions of anatomo-clinical ageing" appears between 45 and 55 years old, "leading to major visible changes in facial harmony during the following decades." Other findings reveal that Asian skin is relatively thicker than Western skin and thus takes longer to show sagging. But once collapse starts, it can look more brutal.

Minus the frightening and pricey option of surgery, there are a virtual cornucopia of topical remedies—from Retinol which has been proven to maintain and enhance the skin's natural production of collagen and is responsible for the skin's strength and elasticity, to Creme La Mer's miracle "broth" which is composed of several ingredients put thru a complex fermentation process and which literally costs an arm and a leg.

Since vanity's price tag can cost us a pretty penny, it is urgent that we study all options available; after all, none of us is getting any younger! •

How our ravaged skin betrays our age

Brown spots—"Only 18 and here we are. We're bound to get worse too, by your thirties."

Sagging cheeks—"Hmm, 34 to 38?"
Upper lip wrinkles—"Let's see, 44 to 48 years old..."

Sagging upper lid—"25, going on 30."
Changes in chin texture—"You must be in your thirties"

Sagging lower face—"Aha, 55!"

Schering-Plough

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-Manilla Santos
Varsity Player

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Text and photograph by Margaux Salcedo

Two Friendly Neighborhood Diners

A good, filling breakfast may just be a block or two away

PANDESAL with *kesong puti* (local white cheese) will always be my favorite breakfast meal, but every now and then I crave a classic American breakfast with a heaping serving of eggs and salmon or bacon. Heaven and Eggs aside, our metropolis has a real dearth of good continental breakfast food so that, unless you go to a hotel, you'll have to put your craving aside and go Pinoy for your first meal of the day.

My own craving for diner food, which had been at rest for some time, made a comeback after I ate at The Flying Pan in Hong Kong a month ago. Competitive and nationalistic foodie that I am, I arrived back in Manila determined to find an equally amazing diner. A couple of friends recommended The Filling Station on P. Burgos in Makati, smack in the middle of Sleazyville. I was admittedly initially skeptical, biased against the area's demographic and thinking that this market didn't care much for food. But I was determined to find a good diner and you know what, I realized that my initial misgivings were unfounded. If you give it a chance, Burgos rocks.

The Filling Station is amazing. I dare say it is the best diner we have. This restaurant is a trip back to the '50s and only lacks food servers in rollerskates to complete the set. The floors are black and white checkered tiles, the walls are abundant with movie posters from the '30s, '40s, '50s and '60s, and the ceiling has vinyl albums on display. A juke box rests by a post and billiard tables are in the center of the room. Lifelike statues of Elvis and Batman make great topics of conversation, along with the vintage phones near some tables.

The menu tries to be all American but also contains staple Philippine bar chow such as gambas. Best for the bunch would be the chili fries, which are fat sticks drowned in beans and cheese. The pizza is not consistently great so you may be taking a chance, but the eggs Benedict delivers.

Eggs Benedict with salmon and spinach

It takes some determination to make it to this restaurant, though. Burgos is a busy street and you may have to park all the way in Kalayaan and walk your way to this diner, enduring a two-minute tour of nightclub facades nearby. A caveat for the 'rents: I would give this place, along with its couple of stars, a rating of PG-13. Intercontinental kissing and cuddling may be in sight.

Another recent discovery, and more welcoming for the entire family, is a neighborhood restaurant in Salcedo Village. Apartment 1B used to be a bar called Confusion. Now it is, shall we say, "enlightened," with its stark white albeit textured walls and oak-colored vinyl-tiled floors. It is quite homey now, the restaurant tables circled not only with chairs, but also with couches and pillows. It's a Pottery Barn ambiance, quite pleasant for lunch or a late afternoon wind-down with buddies.

I had been to this restaurant a couple of times for lunch, when it gets crowded by the way, and a few other times for dinner. But only recently did I try their breakfast meals, which are served beginning 7 a.m. Although this place is not a diner, their eggs Benedict with smoked salmon and spinach beats The Filling Station's. It's a pricey P435 though, but it's good enough for two if you have a light appetite, and worth every bite. It swarms with flavor and is a well thought-out breakfast meal. You may go a little overboard with this if you have it right before work, but the place has very good brewed coffee to balance the bulge. The brand on the blackboard above the bar says Vittoria, and I'm sold on it.

For lunch or dinner, go for the roast chicken. It's a hefty half chicken served with mashed potatoes and veggies. It is executed simply but hits the nail on the head with texture and flavor. The other dishes are regular restaurant fare: The grilled blue marlin comes with pesto pasta but like the spaghetti carbonara, it is filling but nothing exceptional.

All in all, though, the place is a great neighborhood restaurant. After a long day with the Boss Joes of the world, the yuppies should find it cool to wind down al fresco just outside the restaurant doors facing Sedeno Street. These days, the night breeze is cool without being chilly and surprisingly unpolluted this section of the village. The location is a convenient walk for lunch although the prices may be more for the One Salcedo bachelors than for the fresh grads. Best of all, the breakfast meals are first class, plus there's free Wi-Fi. You can really consider this place a yuppie's home away from home. Don't be surprised to find me here in slippers with just dear old Mac. •

Apartment 1B is located at Leviste cor. Sedeno Sts., Salcedo Village. Tel. 843-4075.

9 of the latest age-defying products

1. **Clinique's Repairwear Contour Firming Formula**. Contains Retinol in a patented encapsulated form to allow for a slow sustained release. Other ingredients: whey protein, vitamin E and C. Promises a resilient, more contoured appearance of the skin with an immediate lifting effect. P2,890 (30ml)

2. **L'Oreal's Dermo Expertise Revitalift anti wrinkle+firming cream with SPF 15**. A heady mix of Pro-Retinol A Forte, rock samphire and retinol palminate (promises a 55 percent decrease in wrinkles) and Fibre Elastyl that protects and reinforces the elastin in the skin. Promises 90 percent younger-looking skin in four weeks. P875

3. **Crème de la Mer.** This skin repair treatment turned "miracle youth broth" was found accidentally by aerospace chemist Dr. Max Huber to help heal his chemical burns. It was later found to dramatically smoothen skin's appearance over time. P12,500 (2oz)

4. **Estee Lauder Advanced Night Repair Concentrate Recovery Boosting Treatment.** A high powered blend of Amentoflavone, Humulus Lupulus extract and grape seed extract created to boost the skin's natural recovery process during the night. P5,550 (30ml)

5. **Yves St. Laurent Lisse Expert Eye and Lip Intense Anti-Wrinkle Care**. Taking a page from cosmetic surgery procedures, this double-ended pen product delivers the product on one end and uses the other end to stimulate lip contour or pressure points via a massage ball. P3,650

6. **Shu Uemura popular Ace B-G Products adds Ace B-G Reinforcing Eye Cream**. Newly added active Vitamins A, C, E reinforce the anti-aging power of the B-glucan molecule derived from natural yeast and known for its ability to retain the skin's youthful firmness. For skin renewal and radiance (Vitamin A), to boost collagen that increases firmness and reduces fine lines (Vitamin C) and for anti-oxidation and prevention of photo-aging (Vitamin E). P3,595 (eye cream).

7. **Pond's Age Miracle moisturizing cream.** Uses Conjugated Linoleic Acid (CLA), a naturally occurring fatty acid found in red meat, butterfat, milk and cheese recently found to have age repairing benefits. Also contains Vitamins A, C, E and other collagen compounds. P599

8. **Max Factor Age Renew Foundation**. Combines translucent particles to give that soft candlelit glow to the skin, and advanced skin care complex containing amino peptides, Vitamins B3, B5 and E and green tea. P895

9. **Make Up For Ever Liquid Lift Foundation**. Contains Polylift, a biopolymer based on almond proteins to enhance the skin's elasticity, giving the face a firming effect. P1,800 •

Serving the Seniors

GOTTEN your Senior Citizens' ID yet? If you're 60 and above, go to your friendly barangay office and apply for one. Aside from the 20 percent discount from restaurants, drugstores, funeral homes, private hospitals, public transport, hotels, cinemas, recreation centers and groceries, you can avail yourself of the following:

• Free eye check-up at the Philippine Heart Center (ask for Dr. Cynthia Canta)

• Vision screening with the Rotary Club of Kamuning East

• Free prostate examination by urologist at the East Avenue Medical Center

• Free high blood pressure treatment for three months at the Philippine Heart center (ask for Dr. Delfin Encarnacion)

• Free weekly physical fitness and ballroom dancing at the Mabini Hall of the Quezon Memorial Circle, QC

For details, call your local Office of Senior Citizens' Affairs (OSCA) at your municipality. •

Figure It Out

2,470,124: Number of Filipino women over 60 as of 2000

70.08: Life expectancy of a Filipino woman in 1995

73.08: Life expectancy of a Filipino woman in 2005

105: Age of Maria Torres Vicente, oldest living Filipino woman

Compiled by Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research

Cover Story

By Mariel N. Francisco
Photographs by Buck Pago

Shaking their booties—and the years—away

There may be no denying the reality of aging, but ballroom dancing has become a veritable Fountain of Youth for a lot of women who have nothing else to prove, except their capacity to have a good time

IT has been steadily stealing away senior women from grandmothering, flower-arranging, mother-butlering, or simply fading away. And why not? Ballroom dancing provides pure, unabashed, child-like joy, while remaining a sophisticated, liberating, and womanly art.

With nothing else to prove except their capacity to have a good time, active senior women are discovering the fun, fulfillment, numerous health benefits, and camaraderie that ballroom dancing has been breeding in country clubs, hotels, dance studios, or someone's lanai.

"Ballroom dancing is the perfect activity for our age group," says INQUIRER founder and Magsaysay awardee Eggie Duran-Apostol—graceful, glamorous, and by-no-means-retired at eightysomething. "It's exercise, it's socialization, and it's fun!" she says of her cheery group of friends who dance and share merienda every Monday afternoon in her Makati home. Since discovering some ten years ago that dance lessons with a dancing instructor (DI) brought a new kind of high, Eggie has been dancing to her heart's content, executing bends and lifts that are the envy of younger women.

There may be no denying the reality of aging, but ballroom dancing has become a veritable Fountain of Youth for most women, making 80 the new 60, and 60 the new 40.

Letting out the "wild woman" inside: Letty Roxas-Constantino and DI Jimboy Usi

Many of them are high-powered women in the slowing-down mode. Some are widows in the loving-myself mode. Others are aficionados for whom dancing and music are the spice of life. All are there to enjoy their still-vigorous golden years to the hilt, poised for a distant graceful exit in their custom-made dancing shoes. Not only grace but also improved agility, strength, balance, and coordination dissipate fears that the "the old machine is breaking down."

"It's my doctor's orders," says Techie La' O-Velasquez, who dances two to three times a week. Tall, slim, and athletic, she used to play golf, pelota and tennis but shifted to dancing six years ago. After a mild stroke the other year, her doctor told her to resume dancing to regain her balance. She and sister Pacita La' O Manglapus celebrated their 80th birthdays with ballroom dancing parties, the latter's including a surprise performance by her late husband Raul's gang, the Executives Band.

"Dancing is not only for physical fitness; it's also good for the mind," Techie points out, quoting a 21-year study of mental breakdown in old age. Led by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City and published in the New England Journal of Medicine, the study shows that among physical activities such as stair climbing and group exercise, only frequent dancing offered protection against Alzheimer's disease and other dementia.

According to the neurologist who led the research, it may be because dance music engages the dancer's mind. And of course, Techie adds, it's because one has to remember the steps.

It works both ways, so dancing is a winner all around. As other studies show, the strongest predictor of well-being among older people is frequency of social interaction: those who are rich in family and friends have better mental acuity and cognitive functions. On the other hand, lack of social

support, especially a caring inner circle, can be as devastating as any disease or injury.

Dancing has always been a way of life for Mary Angara-Morato, who feels great and looks at least a decade younger than her 86 years. "When I'm dancing, I don't just do the steps—I feel the music. All my worries disappear." she says. She was a mainstay on the TV show "Dancetime with Chito," which popularized the pachangga in the 1960s, and has no intention of sitting in her rocking chair now, despite the demise of her favorite partner, husband Eduardo. Among her fondest memories was the night they danced the opening tango at the Manila Hotel ball that revived ballroom dancing in the 1970s.

Laughter and humor, being able to poke fun at oneself, and facing life's setbacks with a positive attitude are also vital defenses against aging that are learned on the dance floor. An unburdened mind is alert, creative, and open to new things—perhaps even letting out a bit of the wild woman inside.

"My legs are all right, but this one here...," Letty Roxas-Constantino points to her head as she struggles to

The swing of things: DI Rod Galvez and Gilda Cordero-Fernando

remember a name. It is only self-mockery, of course, for this grand dame of 87 still plays the piano two-and-a-half hours a day and gives concerts at home for friends. An activist educator and brilliant collaborator of her husband Renato Constantino's nationalist writings, she is the embodiment of gracious aging in face, figure and outlook.

"I've always loved to dance, but Renato didn't, so I stopped dancing when we got married," recalls Letty. "Will you dance with a DI when I'm gone?" he had asked her during his final illness. "I don't know," she had replied coyly, though she had been dancing for some time. Today four generations of women in her family—down to her great-granddaughter-dance together. Twice a week she dances with friends, and Saturdays she takes private lessons from longtime instructor Pete Concepcion who "taught me correct posture, how to position the head...." But the "emoting" with artfully outstretched arms "I just made it up myself," Letty giggles.

Fellow-academician friends like Sylvia Mendez-Ventura agree that they are never so jolly as when they are cha-cha-ing and fox-trotting on rollicking Tuesdays and Fridays in Rose Sison's studio in New Manila. Sylvia, professor emeritus of English at UP and former director of the UP Press, finds the world of senior dancing a refreshing new world. She sees hilarious irony in the fact that in her seventies, she is now in a different kind of classroom. "I used to be the boss. When I said 'time's up!' my students had to pass their papers. Now a guy half my age tells me 'Don't bend that knee until I send you the signal,'" she laughs.

It was her younger sister, Popsy Mendez-Aquino, who first enticed Sylvia to dance to ward off depression. Both diabetics, they now dance twice a week with wonderful therapeutic

(continued on page 15)

How to Get Started

"There's a dancer in everyone," says dance enthusiast Chay Locsin (not yet a senior). Anyone who is willing to learn can get into ballroom dancing. Here are the first steps to the dance-floor:

1. Drop in on any of the dance clubs or join a dance group in a friend's home and get the feel of dancing with a DI. It's very different from dancing with your husband or boyfriend and takes some getting used to.

2. Choose a good DI for your first teacher, not necessarily the cheapest or best looking. (Of course he must be neat and presentable, and not have too-sweaty hands.) Prefer one who, besides having "*oido*" (ear for music) is "scientific" about his work and keeps up with the latest trends. Make sure you start with the correct posture, turning technique, etc., otherwise they will be very difficult to unlearn.

3. Learn to relax and allow your DI to lead you. Don't try to control anything; just be sensitive to the signals he sends through pressure on your hands or shoulders. Remember that relaxation is the main goal of dancing and is the key to enjoyment.

4. Get good practice dancing shoes that will keep you in comfort for several hours. Dancing shoes are made of soft leather with a thin non-skid sole that allows you to feel the floor. Custom-made shoes are preferred (P1,500 and up), but most department stores have a wide selection of ready-made ones. Imported shoes (for more serious dancing) cost at least $100 and will last for years. Later, you may want to get another pair or two for dressy occasions.

5. Casual clothes will do for dance practice, but it's fun to wear swirly skirts for parties, and formal gowns for balls. Take note that your DI also has to be dressed properly for the occasion.

6. Find a group that you want to dance with regularly. The group support and camaraderie will keep you dancing consistently.

7. Be warned that at first you'll be happy with just being able to dance, but later you'll want to keep learning new steps and styles. It will cost you, but it's worth it for a healthy, creative pursuit like dancing! •

(More on page 12)

By Maria Congee S. Gomez

Muscling in on a youthful sport

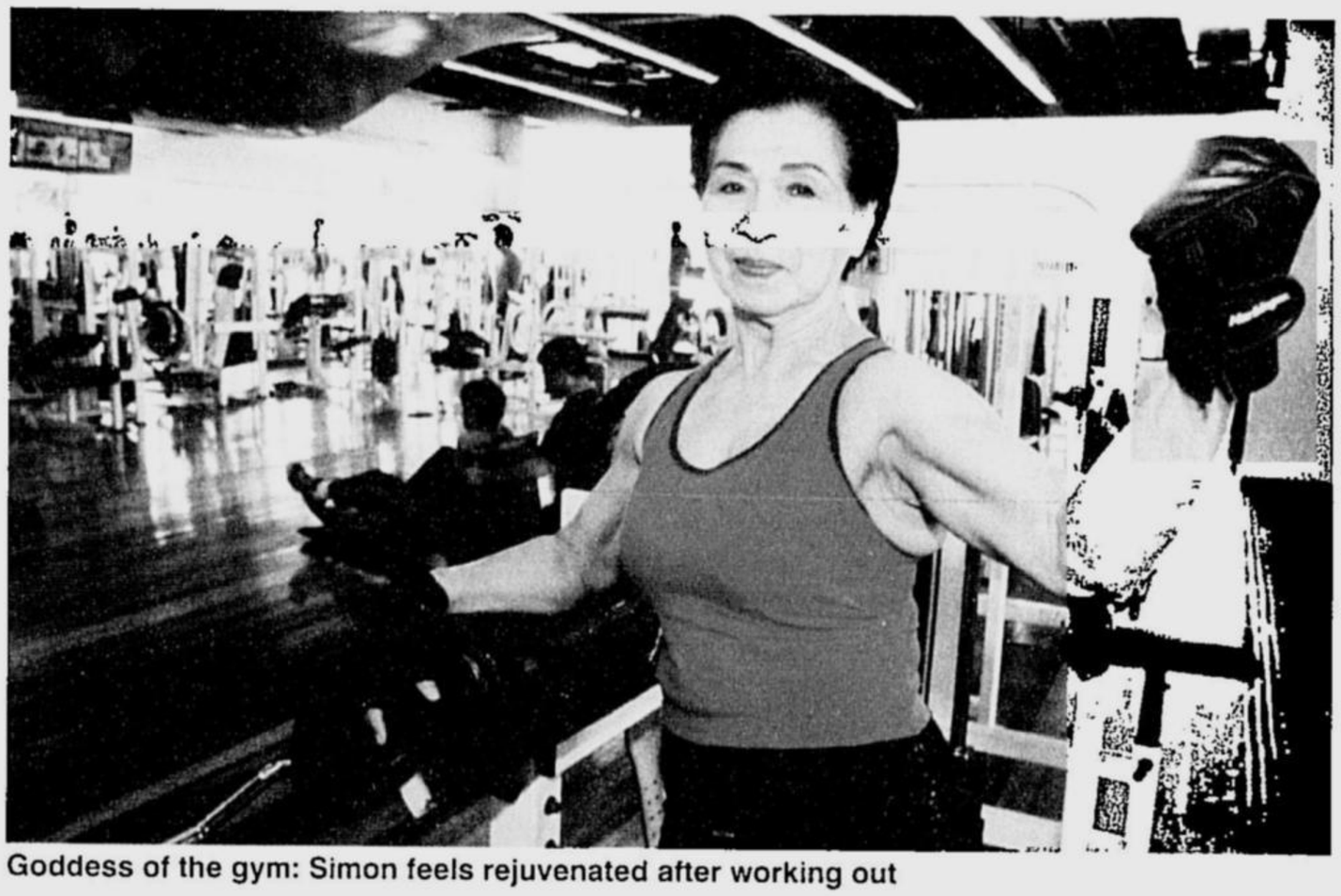
Call her gym grandma, but Teodora Simon, 76, isn't about to let the years stop her from lifting weights to firm up her biceps and buoy up her spirit

TEN years after she won the 1997 Great Bodies title in the Female and the Ageless category, 76-year-old Teodora Simon still does her chest and shoulder press, lateral pulls, bicep curls and tricep extensions four to five hours a day. To maintain a firm tummy, she does three sets of 30 repetitions of abdominal exercises and a rotary torso at 50 lbs.

"The abdomen is every woman's problematic area, that's why I spend a great deal of time on it," says Simon, whose sculpted body does justice to her tight-fitting red racer back T-shirt and black shorts.

So why should a post-menopausal woman punish herself so when others her age have taken the granny track and are enjoying their sunset years in the relative safety of their rocker? Mommy Simon shrugs. "Age is not a barrier to becoming active," she says. "If it's okay and you think you can do it, then by all means do so. Don't wait for that time when you would have lost the energy to do it." Simon, who goes to the gym daily under the supervision of her physical therapist Lawrence, boasts of a clean bill of health: no record of hypertension, a good blood sugar level, no sign of bone loss.

But there's more to her physical exertion than just the obsession with good health. Put it down to boredom, or vanity. Or both. When Simon was widowed in 1997, she was in her mid-60s and not exactly physically fit. Her waistline bulged at 35 inches and she weighed 170 pounds, a disgusting sight, she says. She decided to enroll in an aerobics class offered by her neighbor though she wasn't fully convinced that the sessions would do her good. But she liked the graceful movements and enjoyed the calisthenics part of it. Soon enough, she found herself yearning for something more "arduous," a remnant



Ryan Lim / Venue: Slimmers World Adriatico

Goddess of the gym: Simon feels rejuvenated after working out

perhaps of the hardscrabble life she had endured during the Second World War.

She recounts: "I was 15, the eldest of three siblings, and I had a father who expected a lot from me. I had to work hard, otherwise we would all die of hunger. So I helped him gather and chop the firewood. I also fetched water from the well, carried sacks of mung beans or rice, and walked long distances to buy liters of oil, kerosene and charcoal. Between chores, however, I played indoor baseball at a vacant lot near our house." An early marriage meant a continuation of such routine, as Mommy Simon had to look after the needs of her own family.

With her body accustomed to such a punishing regimen, it was but natural for her to crave the same strenuous workout now that she has time on her hands. Luckily, a newly opened gym in the neighborhood offered what she was looking for and she immediately enrolled in the weights program.

The workouts have a rejuvenating effect on her, she swears. "Every time I finish my routine, I feel I have regained my youth."

But despite the newfound youthful energy, Mommy Simon confesses to feeling hesitant to join the Great Bodies competition at Slimmers World, especially after she saw her much younger competitors. When she finally joined and won the tilt, she knew she had made history and became determined to maintain her record. Aside from the daily workouts, she attributes her strength to specially prepared dishes of green and leafy vegetables and the family support that she gets from her daughter, a grandchild and, soon, a great grandchild who keep her company at home.

A great attitude helps as well. As Mommy Simon likes to say, "Don't stop doing things that you like to do. The right response to aging is to tell yourself that you can do it, and then going ahead with it." •

By Maria Congee S. Gomez
Photographs by Romy Homillada

How Tita Midz finally found her groove and decided to look her age

There's more to life than just looking young and beautiful, says movie producer and actress Armida Siguion Reyna who's had three facelifts back when botox was still considered a venom. Is this sour grapes, or age-old wisdom?

AT 76, Armida Siguion Reyna looks back to a long and blessed life. There's her successful "*Aawitan Kita*" TV program that showcased Filipino music and culture in the '70s, her second wind as a multi-awarded movie actress, producer and anti-censorship activist, the loving family, and now, the proudly graying looks that she carries oh so regally.

She has learned to be comfortable in her own skin, says this woman who fearlessly had several facelifts back when cosmetic surgery was still a word bandied about in whispers, the shameful recourse of the genetically-challenged. She went to the United States for her first face job, *Tita* Midz says candidly, and then had two more done in the Philippines. Indeed, until the 1980s, this institution in local movies strutted about like an imperial dowager with taut, seemingly poreless skin that defied the years. Her hair color similarly pursued a juvenile course, shifting from chestnut brown to blue-black and light brown every two weeks. She only wanted to look and feel better, she says. But even her vanity drew the line at the nose job. She never considered it, she reveals. "I loved my pert nose because it complimented my mestiza features," she says.

Just when you think she'd keep the world eternally guessing about her age now that botox, laser and other facial treatments have become as common as a manicure, *Tita* Midz surprises all by deciding to look her age. Her locks went white overnight, the lines seemed more pronounced, and does she really wear those granny clothes, or is she just rehearsing for a role? Since when did it become fashionable, in these youth-oriented times, to wear one's age and flout it?

***Tita* Midz then and now**

But then again *Tita* Midz has never been one to go along with what's cool and trendy. "I would rather have nature take its course now," she says breezily. "After three face jobs, I've simply grown tired of it. I don't think I'd ever resort to re-constructive surgery now."

Rather than submit to all the beauty procedures that movie stars hold press conferences for, *Tita* Midz subscribes to a simple regimen: no soap on her face and only once a week on her body; regular bathing only with water and a strict vegetable-based diet. "It's actually your diet that determines how your body smells," she says in Filipino, although she concedes that it helps that she's not particularly sweaty.

The women who'd rather have wrinkles than work done on her face expresses surprise at how quickly young people have considered cosmetic surgery. Could be peer pressure, she says, although the current culture of youth and beauty has a lot to do with it as well. "That's part of the values (young people) learn amidst the corruption around us," she muses. "No matter how much parents teach their kids proper values, once they get out of the house, they learn from other children."

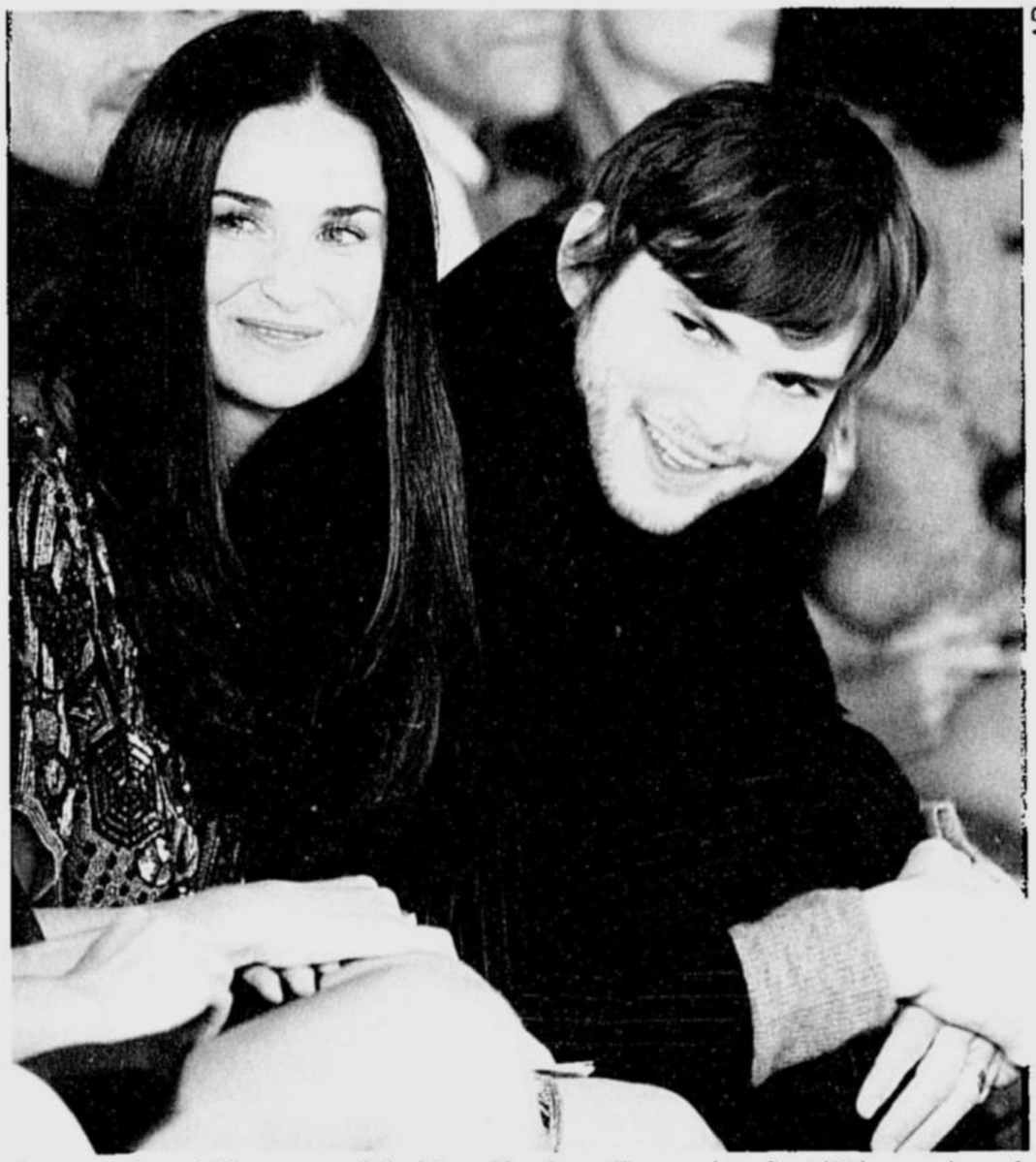
She'd rather pour her energies on things she enjoys doing than squander her time on matters that do not interest her at all, shrugs *Tita* Midz. "I hardly go out attending socials these days," she says, preferring to spend her time supervising archival work on the 6,000 to 8,000 playbacks of her "*Aawitan Kita*" program. Every third Friday of the month, she indulges her love of music with three to four standards at the Makati Park where "*Aawitan Kita*" might soon resume its live programming. Of course, she adds, she's had to avoid the aria type of music and has to use a computer program called pitch management to make her voice sound better. When there's time, she goes over the rows of period costumes in her wardrobe or putter around, tinkering with the knickknacks she's brought abroad. Why, she jokes, she has enough activities "to last me a lifetime."

(continued on page 12)

By Eric S. Caruncho

The Innocence of Age

"Sometimes you just find the right person; she just happens to be older than you"



AP

Actress Demi Moore and Ashton Kucher: Example of a "little-explored phenomenon"

"No girl, however intelligent and warm-hearted, can possibly know or feel half as much at 20 as she will at 35."—**Stephen Vizinczey, In Praise of Older Women**

THE biological factoid that a man's libido peaks at age 18 while a woman's peaks at 40—popularized in the '70s by the bestselling "Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Sex (But Were Afraid To Ask)"—is often cited as the reason why older women gravitate toward younger lovers.

On the other hand, it is assumed that younger women are drawn to older men for non-sexual reasons: their wealth of worldly experience, financial independence, greater self-confidence.

But why some younger men are attracted to older women remains a little-explored phenomenon.

In the Philippines, the fact that older men go for younger women is taken as a matter of course. But younger men who go for older women are often seen as either gigolos, gold-diggers or mama's boys with unresolved Oedipal issues. Older men tend to flaunt their younger girlfriends as trophies of their masculine prowess, but an older women who does the same risks public censure as a cradle-snatcher, a sugar mommy, or a pathetic old hag who has to pay for companionship.

But conversations with some Filipino men who have entered into long-term relationships with women 15 or more years older than them suggest that the attractions of older women are far more complex.

(The fact that these men agreed to talk to **SIM** only on condition of anonymity, however, suggests that the phenomenon of older women and younger men, though seemingly on the rise, remains far from being socially-acceptable.)

Now in his early forties, Jason (not his real name) is a professional working with an NGO. He had his first serious relationship when he was in his early twenties, with a woman who was then already in her forties, an age difference of 20 years.

"I was fresh out of college, working in my first job doing development work, and she was a consultant in one of our projects," he recalls. "We went on several out-of-town trips to the project site and that's how we became close."

The initial attraction, he said, was intellectual rather than physical. "She had already been married and separated, no kids," he says. "She was a workaholic, completely dedicated to her work, was well-read, and interested in the same things that I was—the culture of our ethnic minorities, Philippine history, world events. She was the only one I could talk to about these things. She had also traveled a lot, was a lot more sophisticated than I was at the time. Everything I knew was from reading books, but she had experience."

After several months, they decided to live together.

"It wasn't like a commitment, *tayo na* (we're an item)," he recalls. "It was more like a practical decision—why pay two rents when we're together practically all the time anyway?"

The sex, he says, followed naturally. "We didn't make a big deal out of it, like 'we're doing it *na*, so that means we love each other'," he says. "It was just a natural thing that happens between two people." In hindsight, he adds that this might not have been the case with a girlfriend the same age—there would have been a lot more emotional strings attached.

"We were together for six years," he recalls. "It didn't seem that long because she was busy with her work—she traveled a lot and would be away for weeks. I was also busy building a career. We were more like friends—who once in a while had sex."

It was her decision to end it, eventually.

"It was also a practical decision when we stopped seeing each other," he says. "She got an offer to work

(continued on page 15)

By Claire Agbayani
Photographs by August de la Cruz

On Her Toes After All These Years

At 78, Lydia Buendia isn't about to take aging sitting down. This retired PE professor has taken up her old trade: she's teaching dance and workout classes for free to other elderly women every Friday at the Quezon Memorial Circle

TWELVE years ago, doctor of education Lydia Evangelista Buendia retired from the College of Human Kinetics at the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman. After working for 46 years, Buendia, now 78, a widow, mother of six and grandmother of nine, shows no sign of slowing down.

Maybe it helps that all her children are now pretty settled in their own fields. "Luisito is with the Development Bank of the Philippines. Grace is a dermatologist. Jocelyn is VP of Insular Life. Boyie, a Ph.D. in Public Administration, works with UNDP. Roger, a mechanical engineer, is with Shell. And there's Cesar, a writer and director," rattles off this pensioner with understandable pride.

She's done with her role as wife (to the late Manuel Buendia of GSIS), and as mother, she says, having juggled child raising with teaching what was then the craze in the '70s: "Slimnastics," Hawaiian and Tahitian dances. "*Hindi ako natatakot mag-isa* (I am not afraid to be alone)," she says.

With all her children living away from home, Buendia has "adopted" other children and drawn them into her advocacies. As a volunteer worker with out-of-school youth and down-at-heel children, she helps find sponsors for their clothes, shoes and other necessities.

She's also been working in the past 15 years with the differently abled (the blind, mute, deaf and those with cerebral palsy), enabling them to compete even in international athletic competitions. Her philosophy, she adds, is to look at capacity and overlook the disability: "'*Wag tingnan ang kapansanan, kundi ang kakayahan*."

She extends this belief to her latest volunteer work: teaching dance to the elderly at the Mabini Hall of the Quezon Memorial Circle every Friday.

Ever the teacher: Buendia exhorts her students (below) to sweat it out

This particular morning, a lot of the *lolas* came in late. "*Ay, para kayong mga senyorita de palaypay*, (you're like overindulged princesses)" Buendia ribs the latecomers. Most of the elderly students want to sweat it out, meet new friends, or just forget about their lives at home.

Says park administrator Lolita Amores: "We charge P6,000 for the rental of the space, but we always prioritize the elderly."

It's a favor that the participants seem to appreciate. Says Buendia: "We started with just 10, then it increased to 20 until the group expanded to a point that we can hardly plan the blocking." The group has now ballooned to over 200.

Aside from Buendia, other attendees have been trained to teach the other participants. These women go up front to demonstrate dance steps and handle "cell groups" during the fellowship or *sosyalan* that follow the dance sessions. One of these women is Caring, mother of former child actress Aiza Seguerra.

Asked on how the dance classes have helped them, some of the senior citizens chorused: "*Kami'y mas malakas at mas masigla*! (We have become stronger and healthier)." Others volunteered that their arthritis has gotten better, while some revealed that they've lost weight.

Such affirmations please Buendia no end. She has made a difference in the lives of these senior citizens—whether they be 65 or 88. It all points to the need to share one's talent, she says. "Fan the flame and the gift that God has given you and you will earn His blessings as well." •

Aside from the free Friday dance classes, different movement and dance classes are offered at Quezon Memorial Circle for a minimal fee: Pilates from 8-10 a.m. daily except Wednesdays and Fridays; belly dancing, tai-chi and Brazilian workout, 7-9 a.m. on Saturdays, and ballroom dancing for beginners on Saturdays.

SUDOKU

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

	1	7
	6	
5 2	7 3	9
9 3		1
8	4	6
1		2 5
	7	9 6 5 3
	5	
4	3	

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

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Answer to previous puzzle

7 4 8	5 2 9	6 3 1
9 2 5	1 3 6	4 7 8
1 6 3	4 8 7	9 2 5
6 3 7	2 9 1	5 8 4
4 1 2	6 5 8	3 9 7
5 8 9	7 4 3	1 6 2
2 9 1	3 7 4	8 5 6
8 7 6	9 1 5	2 4 3
3 5 4	8 6 2	7 1 9

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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How Tita Midz finally found... (from page 9)

Ever the Pop *Lola*

Despite that surfeit of determined good cheer, *Tita* Midz acknowledges that she too is feeling the downside of the passing years. Aging is inevitable, says this Pop *Lola* to her grandkids. She could no longer sustain long-reading hours, she confesses, succumbing to drooping eyelids after two pages of reading matter. She misses too the times when she could do brisk walking, jog, or play badminton, or go ballroom dancing. When she recently decided to go on the South Beach diet to maintain her weight, she had to consult her bone-and-joint doctor first.

People who know her have definitely noticed the slow gait that has replaced *Tita* Midz's characteristically quick steps. And because she's worried about her weak reflexes these days, she has taken to wearing a pair of fuchsia-colored Puma sneakers while treading on the polished floors of her first Forbes Park home.

Everybody will grow old, she repeats, "no matter what their social position is." That's why, while she still has the time and energy, she's getting involved in things she loves doing, says *Tita* Midz of her personal anti-aging formula. •

15 more places to let your hair down (from page 7)

Metro Manila abounds with dancing places with more or less the same terms and rates. Usually there is a cover charge of around P400 (consumable in food and drinks), plus tips for the DI's (P100 and up per DI, depending on how many dances). One can also "book" a DI who will dance only with you for P1,500 for the evening.

Here are some of the more popular places, some we've checked out, and others our friends swear by. Note that the hotels and membership clubs have specific days for dancing, so call first before dropping in. Also, some have live bands, others have mobiles, and some have both. All of these places also accept reservations for private dancing parties.

Makati Sports Club (home to Supremes, Crystal Club and Smiles Club)—Salcedo Village
Manila Polo Club—Forbes Park, Makati
Quezon City Sports Club—E. Rodriguez, QC
Club Filipino—Greenhills
Ayala Alabang Country Club
Harmony—Annapolis St., San Juan
Savannah Moon—Libis, QC
Bikes—Chino Roces (Pasong Tamo) Ext., Makati
Ms. O—West Avenue, QC
Teatrino—Promenade, Greenhills, San Juan
Heritage Hotel—Edsa, Pasay
Architectural Center—near Rockwell, Makati
Quezon Memorial Circle—QC
Funside—Timog, QC
Kublai's—Katipunan Avenue, QC

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				5				
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7	4	8	5	2	9	6	3	1
9	2	5	1	3	6	4	7	8
1	6	3	4	8	7	9	2	5
6	3	7	2	9	1	5	8	4
4	1	2	6	5	8	3	9	7
5	8	9	7	4	3	1	6	2
2	9	1	3	7	4	8	5	6
8	7	6	9	1	5	2	4	3
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Difficulty Level ★★★★

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RETAKE OF PRECEDING FRAME

By Ruel S. De Vera

Greying Anatomy

More elderly women than men suffer from Alzheimer's disease, among other problems, says Dr. Shelley de la Vega who practices geriatric medicine. Here's an overview of the common health problems of women over 60

GROWING up in Quezon City, Shelley de la Vega has always enjoyed her grandparents' visits. Like most Filipino grannies, they indulged her a lot. So it should come as no surprise that De la Vega—now Dr. De la Vega—would go on to become a pioneer in geriatric medicine in the Philippines. "I suppose it was because I was close to my grandparents," she recalls. "Geriatric medicine offered up an interesting mix of internal medicine, neurology and psychology."

De la Vega should know. She is the head of the Center for Healthy Aging at The Medical City as well as chair of the Committee on Aging and Degenerative Diseases at the National Institutes of Health at the University of the Philippines-Manila. At the UP-PGH, she helped establish the first charity ward for geriatric patients. She is also President of the Philippine Society of Geriatric Medicine.

After earning her medical degree and her Master's in Science majoring in Clinical Epidemiology at UP, De la Vega trained at the Harvard Medical School before returning to the country in 1997. It was then that she focused on geriatric medicine.

It was an area that is swiftly becoming more relevant even if, as De la Vega notes, the Philippines has a relatively young population, with only six percent of the

De la Vega: Focused on the older patients

country's population being above 60. *(Other sources say it's 12-13 percent.–Ed)*

One of De la Vega's definitive efforts is a 2001 baseline survey of 2,690 respondents with the median age of 68.4, about half of them female. Using the results of that survey, she did a sub-study titled "Patterns of Morbidity and Health Utilization Among Older Filipino Women."

"I found differences between the results for men and women," she says. In some cases, she explains that the higher incidences of some illnesses in women may be due to the fact that women generally consult doctors more often than men. "When it comes to health-seeking practices, women are more proactive."

And yet women seem to outnumber men in some ailments: 18 percent of women against 14.8 percent of men when it comes to heart disease, and 13 percent of women as compared to 11 percent of men for kidney disease.

Asthma is an entirely different story. Because more men smoke, they outnumber elderly women in this ailment: only 13 percent of women have asthma as compared to 18.8 percent of men. Smoking and hypertension again tip the balance against men when it comes to stroke: only seven percent of women against 17.5 percent of men suffer strokes. Diabetes seems to even out the score: about 10 percent of men and women have it.

There are however some illnesses that women become more vulnerable to as they grow older, says De la Vega. Among these are osteoporosis and cancer. "Then there is Alzheimer's disease, which does strike more women than men."

As the country's population gets older, De la Vega says that more services for the elderly must be put in place. Fortunately, she adds, Filipino society puts an emphasis on caring for one's elders. She notes that nursing homes are useful for certain cases: if patients are alone or suffer from extreme dementia, or if their families are abroad.

"But I prefer that we maximize our ways of caring for our aging relatives at home and that we, as a society, support older people and the families who care for them," she states. •

For inquiries, please contact the Center for Healthy Aging at The Medical City at tel. 635-6789 local 6386. For inquiries about the UP-PGH charity geriatric ward, call 521-8450.

Staying healthy, happy and wise

IT is extremely important, Dr. Shelley de la Vega says, for elderly women to engage in "primary and secondary prevention" of ailments. As women age, they must maintain regular visits to their doctors to screen for diseases and conditions. There are five additional steps she recommends:

1. Continue exercising: "Women should be physically active as they grow older."
2. Socialize: "Social isolation has been linked to Alzheimer's as well as morbidity and mortality."
3. Stop smoking: Good advice at any age.
4. Eat more fish and vegetables: Not just for children.
5. Live a spiritually rich life: Amen to that. •

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RETAKE OF PRECEDING FRAME

By Maria Congee S. Gomez

Is the World Mature Enough to Handle Old Age?

"We respect the elderly, but at the same time we don't expect anything from them"

HOW do older people think of themselves?

In a study conducted for the Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE), people over 60 variously describe themselves as being on a "dead end." They note: "As older people, we have been abandoned and are just waiting to die. There is nothing we can do; the only recourse is to die.' Not surprisingly, the study also reveals feelings of anger, hurt and self-pity among the old folks who claim that they are being "abused."

Such feelings are a result of society's ambivalent attitude to old age, says COSE founder and president Ed Gerlock. He adds, "The world is not mature enough to handle old age even if we emphasize that this is the best stage in life."

Philippine society tends to have a schizophrenic look at elderly folk, he notes. "On the one hand, we respect them. But on the other, we don't expect anything from them." They are no longer expected to play major decision-making roles in the family.

COSE has been in operation for 15 years and works in urban poor areas. In upholding the rights and potential of older people, the organization teaches the elderly to go beyond their accepted roles as grandparents whose main task is to take care of grandchildren when the parents are away. "It makes a big difference when elderly people are given back the roles and responsibilities they used to do, than make them sit in a corner now that their children have taken the reins over family matters," says Gerlock.

COSE, whose members are mostly women, have found that in urban poor communities, the greatest need is health care. "If you are poor, old, and a woman, you have three strikes against you and, unless you have a community, nobody can understand or help you," says Gerlock. Although

Romy Homillada

Gerlock (left) listens in on a COSE meeting

Philippine society is family-oriented and takes care of its own, he notes that community orientation is vital to empower the old folks no matter what social bracket they belong in.

The situation is not unique to the Philippines. An aging world has its distinct challenges. Coupled with a decline in population growth in some countries, there are now less younger people supporting the pension funds that must provide for an increasing number of elderly folk. In the Philippines, most old folk have to care for the family left home by overseas Filipino workers, while their own needs are ignored.

The youth factor can help, says this COSE official. One way to get back old folk into the mainstream is to allow the young to interact with them in a story-telling manner that cultivates an exchange of information. Old folk should be actively involved with other people, Gerlock adds.

With 6.5 million, or roughly 13 percent of Philippine population composed of elderly people, according to Dr. Emmanuel Gatchalian, head of St. Luke's Hospital Geriatric Center, the economic factor figures as well in the social services provided them by government. The Department of Social Welfare and Development has allocated only .05 percent of its total budget for the concerns of the elderly, says Gerlock. The local health care system is lousy, he adds, and the 20 percent discount for food, medicine and other services provided by the senior citizens' card is hardly enough. "They're not even honored by the smaller drugstores," says Gerlock.

To be sure, there have been some initiatives from local government units to give services to older folk, he adds. Makati has free health care, free movies, a burial fund and P2,000 incentive money for the elderly; Muntinglupa actually has a pension for those who are 100 and 90 years old, and is now working its way down to the 80-year-olds; Pasig gives a P1,000 Christmas gift to old folk, while Quezon City hires older people as health workers for the elderly and pays them P2,000 a month. COSE meanwhile has a burial fund that has older people contributing P11 a month, with their family receiving P7,000 in burial benefits later.

If he had his way, Gerlock would like to start a social pension fund that would involve an impoverished pilot area and a non-government organization, but support so far has been lacking. "If there are groups interested in starting community-based programs among the elderly poor which would become self sustaining, they can contact us at: 717 Aurora Mariwasa Bldg., Cubao, QC," he calls out. "We would be partners and they would be supporters of the elderly." •

For more information on COSE, call 722-0418, 725-6567, email advocacy@cosephil.org or visit their website www.cosephil.org

The Innocence of Age (from page 10)

abroad, in a job she really wanted. I was doing well here, so there was no question (of me joining her)."

Again, in hindsight, he says that a relationship with someone his own age would have been a lot more complicated. "I didn't realize that until later," he says. His next serious relationship was with someone more or less his age. They met when they were in their late twenties, and eventually married.

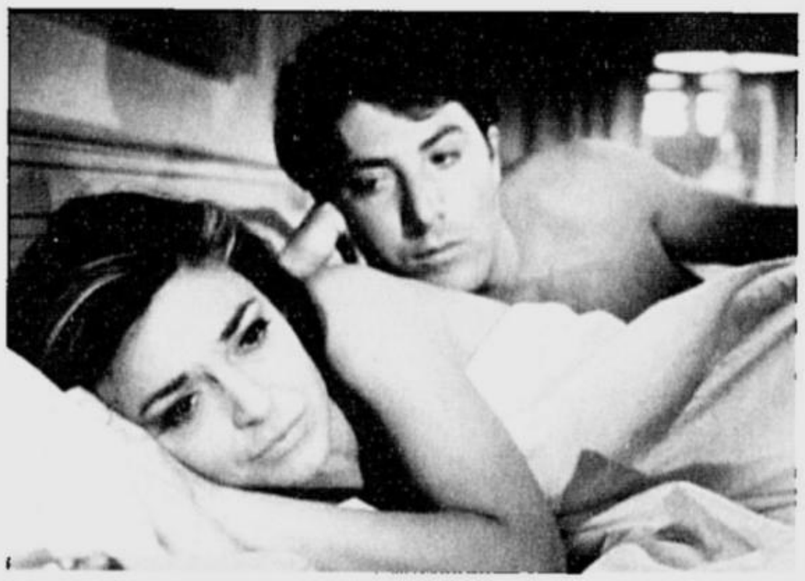
In the case of Stephen (not his real name either), the age difference was simply never an issue.

He was still in college when he met Tonette (not her real name). She was, in fact, one of his teachers. She had also been married and separated, and was 11 years older.

"I had a girlfriend at the time, another student," he recalls. "Tonette was what we used to call 'cowboy'—she got along well with the students because she had a sense of humor. She would hang out with us after class. We were like peers; sexual harassment wasn't yet an issue then."

After he broke up with his girlfriend, however, Stephen and Tonette started seeing each other alone after school. "It started with just us talking," he says. "I could talk to her about anything. We were comfortable with each other."

They had to keep a low profile, however, since teacher-student liaisons were frowned upon, although the rules were more strictly applied to male teachers and female students. There were few precedents for the opposite.



An older Anne Bancroft seduces a younger Dustin Hoffman in "The Graduate"

After Stephen graduated, Tonette left her teaching post and the couple came out in the open. Eventually they started living together, starting a small business which they still operate today. They are technically an unmarried couple, since Tonette never bothered to have her earlier marriage annulled.

"For me it's not a question of whether older women are better or easier to live with than younger women," he says. "I wouldn't know. Sometimes you just find the right person and she just happens to be older than you." •

Shaking their booties... (from page 7)

effects: weight loss, lower blood sugar, increased physical stamina, improved immune system, and no aches and pains. "We'd rather pay our DIs for something we enjoy, than the doctor and hospital for medical bills," chorus the trim and pretty sisters.

Is there hope for those who feel ballroom dancing is not their strong suit? Gilda Cordero-Fernando—a Juana-come-lately to the ballroom dancing scene—loves to dance but claims she cannot follow instructions. Yet she always has a whale of a time at Sison's studio where, after one or two standard numbers, the DIs indulge her creative self-choreography. So, although women winkingly accept that "ballroom dancing is a man's world because your DI leads and you follow," the maverick Gilda proves it ain't necessarily so.

Lita Tanjanco-Banson had always felt that she has two left feet, perhaps because her husband Onofre was such a good dancer. She took up dancing only 10 years ago when she was 60-plus, dances twice a week (on top of yoga and gym work), and swears she could now be voted "Most Improved Dancer" of the Smiles Club, where she is treasurer and precious Exhibit A. When at a dance, she hardly sits down. "I'm not really a graceful dancer," she insists, "but for energy and determination I'm Number One." Deep backbends and bold "air-lifts" by her regular DI, Rowie Dacillo, have her friends gasping and worrying, but she loves it—"just like flying!"

The importance of trust and confidence in one's DI cannot be over-emphasized, according to Lita. With the rise of international ballroom dancing, the local DI profession has also evolved, she observes. The best DI's nowadays are "scientific": they keep up with global trends by attending workshops with foreign teachers, and challenge themselves by joining competitions here and abroad. Morale is also very high among professional DI's who dance fulltime: none of those we interviewed expressed the desire to shift to another calling, except perhaps to have one's own business in the future.

Warmth and mutual respect clearly mark the relationship between DIs and their "golden girls." What of the tales of women falling in love with their DIs? "It happens..." I was blithely told, but "at our age, our families don't worry about that anymore." Given all the benefits reaped from dancing, children, husbands and ex-husbands heartily approve, finance, and even join the dance activities.

Some groups like the Smiles Club are also into charity work, donating funds raised through their balls to worthy causes. Organized in 1980 by a small circle of avant-garde matrons, it is the grandmother of all ballroom dancing groups. Many of its pioneering members such as Celia Gamboa-Jison, Rosie Osmena-Valencia, and Ginny Benitez-Licuanan have waltzed their way to their eighties and still dance at the Makati Sports Club every Thursday—"except Holy Thursday!" they want us to take note. Today the club has around 40 members, the oldest of whom is the elegant Nena Alejo-Oreta, 93.

So ladies, let's learn from our elders and start now. Light hearts plus light feet equals a longer and better quality of life. And if you must go toward that golden sunset, make sure you're wearing your dancing shoes! •

Why not the world?

– Lea Salonga

Dare to ask.
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

LIFESTYLE / D1

Licad, son team up in Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra concert

BUSINESS / B1

SM tourism project in Batangas twice the size of Macau

ENTERTAINMENT / G1

Piolo says dream movie 'Wrinkles' to finally push through

NEWS / A2

Palace not bothered by US Congress probe of extrajudicial slays

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BA[illegible]ED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, March 12, 2007 ★★ 10 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 94 P18

Retired Comelec exec joins election watchdog

By Arlyn dela Cruz
Contributor

A RETIRED COMMISSIONER OF THE COMMISsion on Elections has joined a new poll monitoring group called Halalang Marangal (Halal) because the structure which he believes led to cheating in the 2004 elections is still in place.

Mehol Sadain has teamed up with a group of

RETIRED/ A6

Now is the right time to run, says Pacquiao

By Aquiles Zonio
Inquirer Mindanao

GENERAL SANTOS City—Boxing superstar Manny Pacquiao believes this is the right time for him to run—at the peak of

NOW IS/ A23

PACQUIAO

FIREFIGHTERS try to contain the flames engulfing the Commission on Elections building in Intramuros, Manila. AP

Fire razes Comelec building

Probers don't rule out sabotage

By Nikko Dizon and Allison W. Lopez

A PREDAWN FIRE RIPPED THROUGH THE Spanish-era building of the Commission on Elections yesterday, causing damage that was unlikely to affect the conduct of the coming May 14 balloting, officials said.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos said that everything the poll body needed for the May polls was in the adjacent main headquarters at the Palacio del Gobernador. "Not one of the documents that we need was in the old building," Abalos told the INQUIRER by phone.

The gutted two-story wooden building housed the offices of the Comelec executive director, deputy executive director for operations, deputy executive director for administration, the education and information division, the records division, statistics office, administration services department, the Comelec

FIRE RAZES/ A22

3 caught copying ballots

By Nikko Dizon

THREE MEN CLAIMING TO BE casual employees were caught inside the National Printing Office (NPO) a week ago while allegedly copying the serial numbers of official ballots to be used in the May 14 midterm elections, the INQUIRER has learned.

INQUIRER sources said in separate interviews that the Commission on Elections had been informed of the incident. But Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos said he had not seen the report.

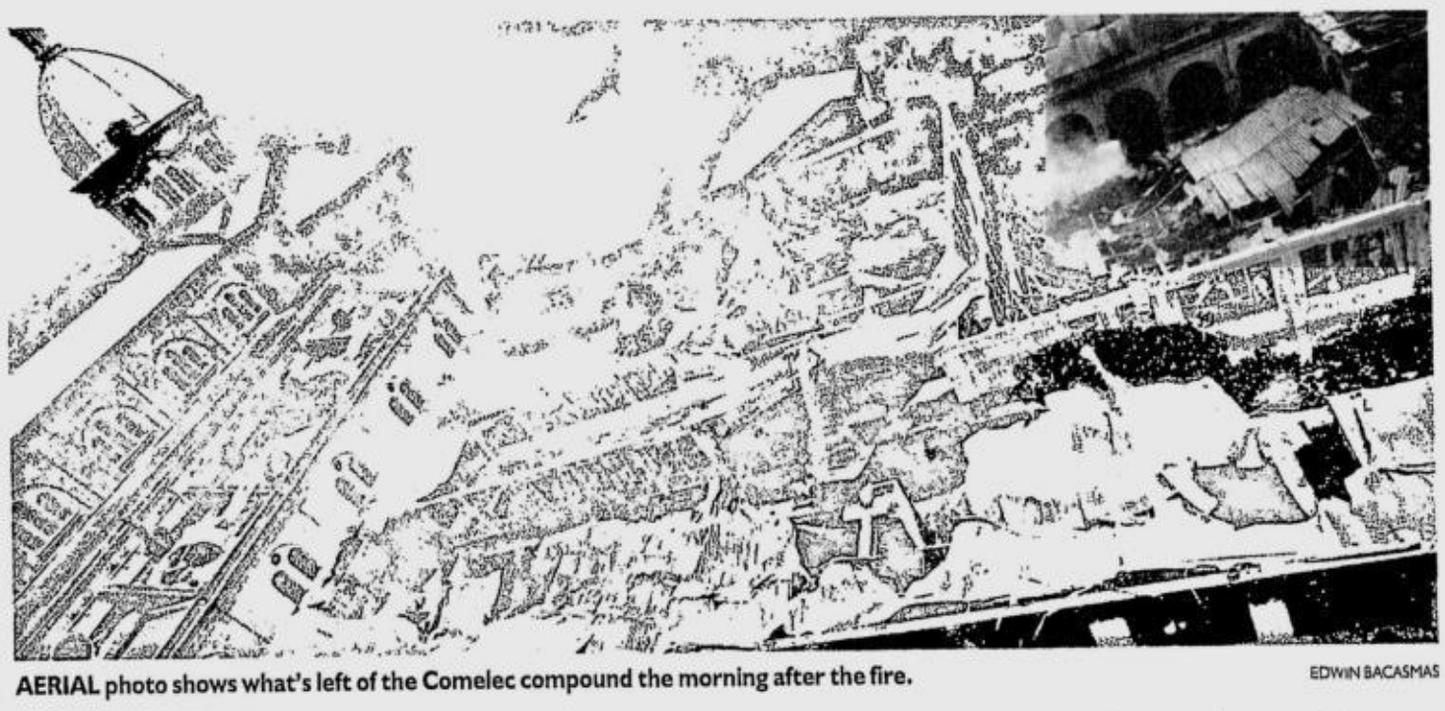
"Yes, I will call for an investigation if that is reported to me," Abalos told the INQUIRER by phone yesterday. Abalos said that if the report were true, he wanted the men identified.

One of the sources, however, said the incident was discussed on Saturday during a conference between Comelec and NPO officials, held at the NPO office in Quezon City.

"The Comelec printing committee has, I think, asked to have a meeting with NPO chief Felipe

3 CAUGHT/ A4

A FIREMAN saves some documents from the burning offices. AP



AERIAL photo shows what's left of the Comelec compound the morning after the fire. EDWIN BACASMAS

Cop pushes Pasig shabu conviction

By Nancy Carvajal

A TOP POLICE OFFICER SAID THE CONviction of the people behind the once-sprawling P900-million shabu market in Pasig City would be the centerpiece of the government war on illegal drugs, and warned that the dismissal of the case against its supposed operator could demoralize law enforcers.

In an interview with the INQUIRER on Friday, Director Geary Barias expressed dismay at the obstacles thrown in the way of the prosecution of those behind the "one-stop shabu restaurant," which the police dismantled in a raid in February last year that resulted in the arrest of about 300 people.

Barias also lamented recent pronouncements by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez about the supposed weakness of the police evidence.

The dismissal of the case could raise questions about the government's sincer-

COP PUSHES/ A6

Police raid reenacts repressive methods of Marcos regime

By Amando Doronila

THE POLICE RAID ON THE HOME OF Rep. Satur Ocampo last weekend throws the country back to 1972 during the mass roundup of opponents of the regime of President Ferdinand Marcos following the declaration of martial law.

Accounts of the raid by Ocampo's wife, Carolina Malay, and household members vividly reproduce the cameo of the arbitrary methods of the Marcos regime and the hysterical atmosphere of the anticommunist witch-hunt of the era.

Those born after Sept. 11, 1972, have their knowledge of martial law blurred, based on the recollections of victims of the roundup.

Those of voting age in May 2007 could get a vivid snapshot of what it was like in 1972, from the reports or TV footage (if there are any), of how Ocampo's house was raided in the manner of the mass arrests of 1972.

ANALYSIS

The raid is a grotesque reenactment of the repressive methods of the 1970s. It impresses upon Filipinos how anachronistic is the regime that masquerades as a democracy. It underlines the point that it is out of place in the milieu of the democratization wave in developing countries since the 1980s.

According to first-hand witness accounts, including Malay's, the police team forced its way into their house in Heroes Hill, Quezon City, serving only a photocopy of an arrest warrant, with a wrong address.

The warrant was based on multiple criminal charges accusing Ocampo and other members of the Communist Party

POLICE RAID/ A23

BIR receipt drive yields massive tax cheating

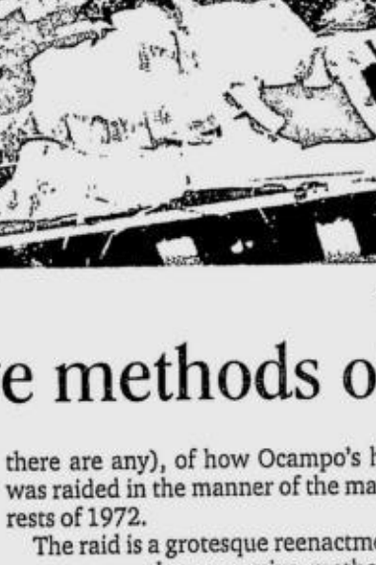
By Doris C. Dumlao

A POPULAR GOVERNMENT RAFFLE program has uncovered massive tax cheating by more than half of the 140,000 establishments whose receipts were submitted by consumers to the Bureau of Internal Revenue for a chance to win P1 million.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves had pledged to the global donor community that the government would aggressively pursue the prosecution and conviction of tax evaders, smugglers and erring Department of Finance officials.

"Our Premyo-sa-Resibo (Prize for Receipt) campaign should help us further strengthen enforcement by providing additional information on noncompliant taxpayers, including those issuing fake receipts," Teves said in a report submitted to the Philippine Development Forum in Cebu City last week.

BIR RECEIPT/ A8



To have, hold, cherish –but sleep separately

NOT SINCE THE VICTORIAN AGE OF starched sheets and starchy manners, builders and architects in the United States say, have there been so many orders for separate bedrooms. Or separate sleeping nooks. Or his-and-her wings.

In interviews, couples and sociologists say that often it has nothing to do with sex. More likely, it has to do with snoring. Or with children crying. Or with getting up and heading for the gym at 5:30 in the morning. Or with sending e-mail messages until well after midnight.

TO HAVE/ A23

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2007

EZ2 Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening
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(All in exact order)

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern Luzon will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered light rains. Eastern Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/03/11/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Palace unfazed by US hearings on killings

By Michael Lim Ubac and Leila B. Salaverria,

MALACAÑANG APPEARS UNPERTURBED BY THE MOVE OF THE United States Congress to conduct hearings on the political killings in the Philippines.

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales told the INQUIRER it was not unusual for the US Congress to investigate issues occurring outside America.

"The US knows the nuances of an investigation. *Maayos naman ang* US (The US is OK)," he said.

Gonzales said the inquiry was neither an affront to the Philippines' sovereignty nor a breach of courtesy among nations.

The Palace has yet to decide whether it will send a top envoy to make representations with the US Congress, he said.

Rep. Tom Lantos (Democrat, Calif.), chair of the House foreign relations committee, will preside over a hearing on the Philippine human rights issue at 10 a.m. on March 14 in Washinton D.C., while Sen. Barbara Boxer (Democrat, Calif.), chair of the East Asia Sub-Committee of the Senate, will conduct an inquiry at 2:30 p.m. on the same day.

The hearings were the result of grassroots lobbying by Filipino-American organizations that included the United Methodist Church and the militant party-list group Partido ng Manggagawa (PM).

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, however, believes the US Congress should not investigate an internal matter like the extrajudicial killings in the Philippines.

But he said the hearings would be an opportunity for the Philippine government to clear its name and rebut allegations it was behind the killings.

Gonzalez said it was up to the Philippine government whether or not to participate in the hearings.

"I think it's something that should not take place. But if I remember correctly, even during the time of Cory (former President Corazon Aquino), there was a hearing in the US Congress where Filipinos testified. There is a precedent, we sent a delegation to the US to testify on human rights," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez had earlier blasted a United Nations special rapporteur who was in Manila to probe the spate of killings for saying the Philippine military was in denial about them.

Militant groups have blamed the killings on the military.

Gonzalez said he thought the Americans had been misinformed about the Philippine government's role in the killings.

"There are people in the country who are dragging the Philippines [before the US Congress] for their own propaganda purposes," he said.

But the defense establishment is not bothered at all by the US Congress' move to investigate the political killings.

"We're not alarmed ... we are not affected,'" defense spokesperson Undersecretary Ernesto Carolina said, noting that it was not the first time the US Congress had scheduled hearings on matters involving other countries.

Carolina reiterated that the defense and military establishments were now investigating the killings "one by one."

Although on the run, Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo yesterday said he would "participate" in the US hearings.

"I will participate in the hearings," he said in a statement posted on the party-list group's website yesterday.

Ocampo, however, did not say how he exactly planned to join the hearings. *With report from Christine O. Avendaño, Christian V. Esguerra and Gil Cabacungan Jr.*

Satur arrest part of new offensive vs Reds – Palace

By Michael Lim Ubac

TAGBILARAN CITY—THE ARREST of Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo is part of the government's renewed offensive against communist rebels, following the failed move to assimilate the communists into the political mainstream, a Malacañang official said yesterday.

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales told the INQUIRER the Arroyo administration had sought the arrest of the outspoken leftist lawmaker because of his past sins and his link to the Communist Party of the Philippines-National Democratic Front (CPP-NDF).

"We're establishing the legal parameters of the nation... that armed rebellion is no longer acceptable as a means of achieving political change," Gonzales said.

He denied the government had abandoned its avowed policy of convincing top communist rebels to continue their crusade through parliamentary struggle.

The Philippine National Police, meanwhile, has asked the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) to issue arrest warrants or "red notices" for Jose Ma. Sison, Luis Jalandoni and others for multiple murder.

Sison is the founding chair of the CPP and its military wing, the New People's Army (NPA). Jalandoni is head of the NDF.

"An Interpol red notice is the closest instrument to an international arrest warrant in use today," PNP Director General Oscar Calderon said in a statement.

"The same notice is also being sought for other co-respondents of Sison who may have fled abroad and who are also the subject of warrants of arrest issued by the courts," Calderon said.

Sison, Jalandoni and Ocampo are among 53 persons issued arrest warrants for multiple murder last week by the regional trial court in Leyte.

The PNP and Philippine Army also started a manhunt for the rest of the CPP-NDF officers and members who face multiple murder charges.

The accused have been indicted on 15 counts of murder allegedly committed during the purge of suspected "spies and counterrevolutionaries" within the CPP/NPA between 1985 and 1991.

The remains of the 15 murder victims were among 67 bodies exhumed by forensic investigators in the NPA's "killing fields" in Leyte on Aug. 26, 2006.

CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal denied the charges against Sison and Ocampo, saying the two were in military detention during the regime of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos when the alleged killings took place in Leyte.

Sison was in prison from 1977 to 1986. He left the Philippines in 1986 for a speaking engagement and never returned. He sought asylum in the Netherlands in 1987 following the collapse of peace talks with the government.

Jalandoni, a former Catholic priest, has been out of the country since the 1970s, according to Rosal.

Ocampo, who has gone into hiding, plans to turn himself in this week to face the charges in the regional trial court in Leyte, said his lawyer Romeo Capulong.

Fernando Hicap of the militant party-list group Anakpawis, who is also chair of the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya), maintained that Ocampo had nothing to do with the crimes being imputed to him.

"The Arroyo government wants Bayan Muna Representative Ocampo to leave the parliament of the streets, mainstream politics and his pro-people and fiscal work in Congress and rejoin the underground movement in a vain attempt to eliminate the most effective critic of the ruling political syndicate in Malacañang, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the House of Representatives," Hicap said. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño; Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon; Joey A. Gabieta, Inquirer Visayas; AFP; AP*

'Too early to celebrate gov't-MILF deal'

COTABATO CITY—GOVERNMENT NEGOTIAtors and the country's largest Islamic guerrilla group are talking of a breakthrough in efforts to end one of the world's oldest Muslim rebellions, but they may be overly optimistic.

Analysts and residents of this city, which is in the midst of the area where the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) operates, say there are too many complexities in an insurgency now into its fourth decade for it to be easily resolved.

Government negotiators have offered the Moros—Muslim inhabitants of the southern Philippines—the right of self-determination, which could lead to a homeland of their own where they would enjoy considerable autonomy, but not independence.

MILF chair Al Haj Murad has called the offer an advance in the peace process, which has achieved little in years of negotiations and has often been interrupted by renewed fighting.

Speaking to reporters at his jungle camp on Saturday, Murad said hurdles remained, but the new government offer has "given some light to the negotiations."

As he made the declaration, the MILF warned on its website yesterday that a fragile four-year ceasefire with the government was on the verge of collapse.

It said the ceasefire might collapse due to the "military's arrogance and defiance."

It said the MILF would not take the military's repeated aggression "sitting down."

Zachary Abuza, an expert on Southeast Asian politics at Simmons College in Boston, said in contesting the upbeat outlook of the negotiators: "I understand they are optimistic about something simply because the government is trying to think creatively for the first time ever.

"I think they are overly optimistic because there are a lot of complicating factors in the agreement." *Reuters;AFP*

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DOLE: RP must hike productivity

THE PHILIPPINES NEEDS TO IMPROVE on labor productivity to attain a globally competitive work force, according to the National Wages and Productivity Commission.

The NWPC, an attached agency of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), on Friday said the Philippines had yet to improve on its productivity to reach its goal of sustainable economic growth and global competitiveness.

In 2005, the Philippines ranked only No. 11 among Asian countries in terms of productivity level. That year, it had an average productivity of $663.80, the NWPC said.

Among Southeast Asian countries rated (excluding Burma and East Timor), the Philippines was third lowest, ranking only higher than Cambodia and Vietnam.

Topping the list were Hong Kong ($56,254.66) and Singapore ($47,621.51).

Labor productivity is the average output per employed person. It is computed by dividing the annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by the number of employed people.

NWPC officer in charge Executive Director Esther Guirao said the agency, in coordination with the different DOLE agencies, will set up a framework that would boost the efforts of the government on productivity awareness.

Guirao said the framework will be anchored on the objectives of promoting productivity improvement and gainsharing toward competitiveness and poverty alleviation. *Jerome Aning*

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NINE MORE PARAÑAQUE SUBDIVISIONS CONNECTED TO MAYNILAD. After 22 years of relying on water vendors and deepwells for their water supply, about 2,750 households at Tahanan Village, Jackielouville, Mon-El, Teoville 1, 2 & 3, Goodwill 3, Maywood and Meliton Subdivisions and 201 commercial establishments along President's Avenue at Barangay BF, Parañaque finally began getting water directly from their faucets with the formal inauguration last March 3, 2007 of the reactivated and re-energized 750mm pipeline along President's Ave. No less than President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo opened the ceremonial faucet witnessed by (from left) MWSS Administrator Lorenzo Jamora, Brgy. BF chairwoman Florencia Amurao, MWSS senior deputy administrator Macra Cruz, Parañaque City mayor Jun Bernabe, vice mayor Anjo Yllana, Congressman Eduardo Zialcita, Maynilad officials led by VP for Operations and Engineering Irineo Gonzales and Parañaque/Muntinlupa Business Center manager Regino Cruz. Parañaque's water supply has tremendously improved with the "Bring More Water to the South" (BMWS) program of Maynilad under which water from the other parts of the West Zone concession which are normally lost to illegal connections or leaks are recovered and reallocated to the south, thus boosting the water availability and pressure in Parañaque.

ADVT

Acting chief of printing body faces graft raps

By Norman Bordadora

THE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF the National Printing Office is facing graft charges, along with the man she replaced temporarily, in connection with an NPO award of a printing job allegedly worth P91 million in April 2006.

A complaint before the Ombudsman shows NPO OIC Marietta de Guzman is a co-respondent of NPO Director Felipe Evardone in the alleged rigged bidding that had resulted in Evardone's suspension by Malacañang late last year.

The action against Evardone, recommended by the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission, was implemented on Oct. 4 only to be lifted by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita on Oct. 30. *(See related stories on Pages A1 and A7.)*

The complaint filed before the PAGC involving the P91 million worth of printing jobs for the Bureau of Customs in April 2006 was lodged by former NPO supplier Ernest Printing Corp.

Ombudsman's case

The Ombudsman case, on the other hand, was filed by Bestforms Inc., another NPO supplier that felt aggrieved by the alleged rigged bidding for the customs forms in April last year.

Both Bestforms and Ernest have been discredited by the NPO under Evardone for alleged violations of government procurement processes.

In both the PAGC and Ombudsman cases filed by both printers, De Guzman was named chair of the NPO's bids and awards committee.

The two firms alleged that they were prevented from taking part in NPO's April 10, 2006, bidding for the printing of the BOC's "accountable forms" and that they were told the bidding was only for jobs worth P3 million.

'Predetermined' winners

It was later learned that the contracts worth a total of more than P91 million were given to Evardone's alleged "predetermined winning bidders"—Advance Computer Forms Inc. and Holy Family Printing Corp.

It was further alleged that the award was made on the same day the bidding was conducted.

"(Even) assuming without admitting that the budget certified by the Bureau of Customs for the (April 10, 2006) sham bidding was in the amount of P3 million only, still the mind-boggling award of P91,758,360 made by respondent (Evardone) and the NPO-BAC (including its chair De Guzman) to the same favored and predetermined winning bidders ... shall certainly qualify it for the Guinness Book of World Records," read Bestforms' Ombudsman complaint.

The complaint was filed on July 11, 2006, and signed by one of Bestforms' owners, Faustino Datu Jr.

3 caught copying ballots

From page A1

Evardone," one of the sources said on condition of anonymity as no one has been authorized to speak about the incident.

Evardone went on leave on March 1, after his brother, Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone, was appointed media coordinator for the administration's senatorial candidates. Evardone has been implicated in several graft cases in the printing office. *(See related story above and on Page A7.)*

Confidential material

The source said there was already a written report on the incident. The source said the motive of the three men, whose names were not immediately known, was still unclear.

According to the INQUIRER sources, a member of the Comelec printing committee caught the three men taking down the serial numbers of the official ballots and the places (municipalities and cities) where these ballots were "assigned."

One source said a supervisor who saw the men was surprised by what they were doing. "It was a good thing they weren't able to copy a lot," said this source.

The sources explained that this information was highly confidential and was supposed to be known only to the "top officials of the printing committee."

Restricted area

The three men were in the NPO pre-press area, where the layouts of the official ballot forms are kept before these are printed out. The area is highly restricted.

"They were not supposed to be there," the source said.

The three men were reportedly wearing Comelec uniforms and had IDs similar to those issued by the agency.

The sources, however, could not say what happened to the men or whether charges had been brought against them.

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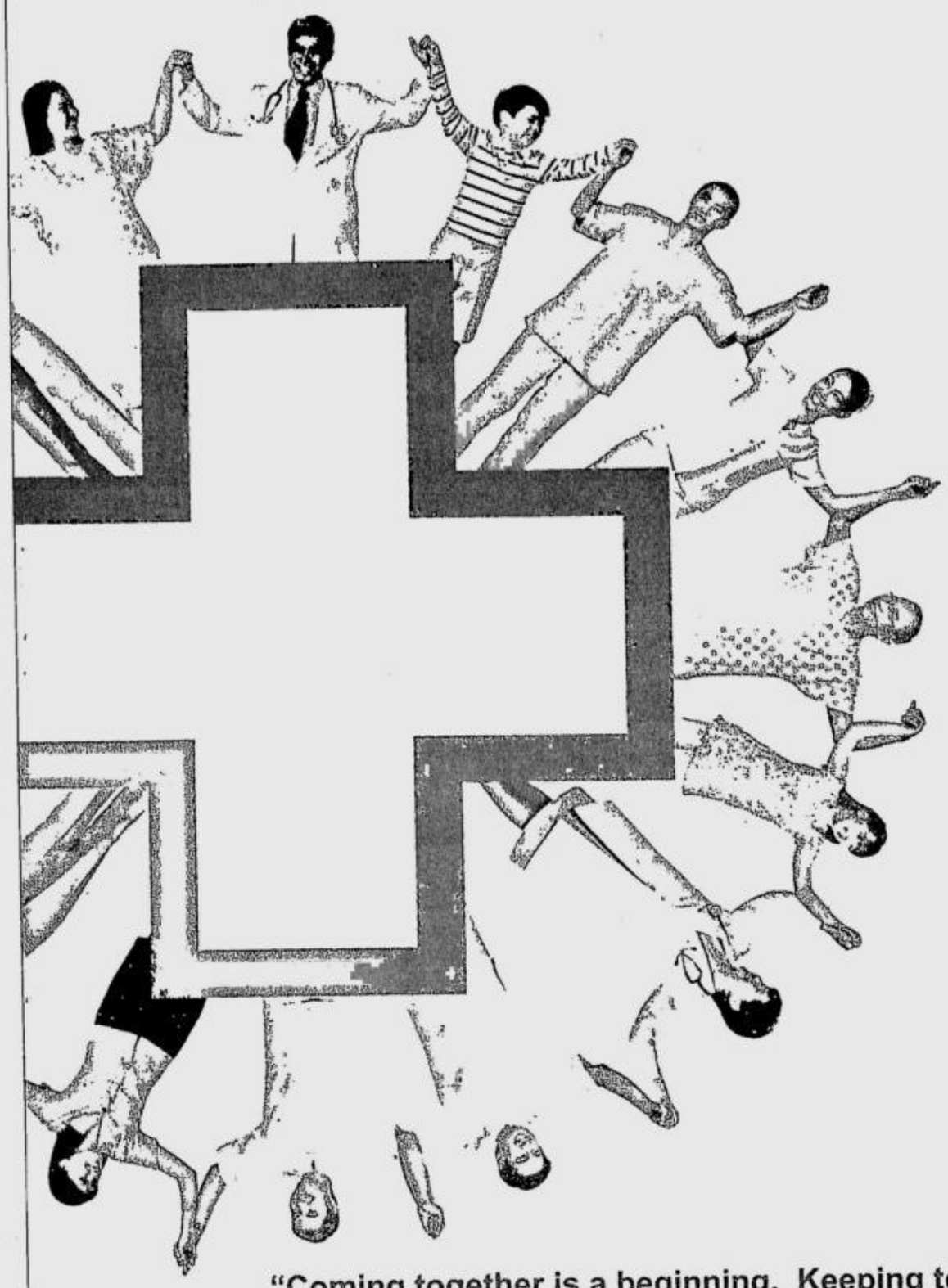

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Cop pushes Pasig shabu conviction

From page A1

ity in stamping out the P700-billion illegal drugs industry, in which shabu is the biggest item, Barias suggested.

Barias heads the Philippine National Police Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force (Aidsotf), the agency prosecuting Amin Imam Boratong, alleged owner of the 2,000-square-meter compound of shabu stalls.

Boratong has denied the allegation and pointed to Samer Palao—whom he described as his "biological brother"—as the real operator.

Palao is the main police witness against Boratong.

"I don't know, but he (Boratong) must be that influential that he can make things happen. He was able to derail the hearing of his case instead of it [proceeding] smoothly," Barias said.

"If the case would be dismissed, I could not find a word to describe the [lack of] determination of the government in pursuing an end to these drug problems," Barias added.

Shabu is the drug of choice of Filipino users. Officials estimated there were around 6.7 million regular users of shabu in the country as of 2005.

Authorities believed the Pasig shabu market, which opened in 1997, had grown to a P900-million industry by the time police demolished it last year.

Tug of war

Palao is himself facing a murder charge and is at the center of a tug-of-war within the judiciary.

Barias said an order from the Misamis Oriental Regional Trial Court to bring Palao to Cagayan de Oro City to answer the murder charge had caused concern among law enforcers.

The court had ordered PNP Director General Oscar Calderon to bring Palao to Cagayan de Oro for his arraignment on March 15.

Palao claims he served as the right-hand man of Boratong in operating the shabu stalls.

In June 2006, or three months after the Pasig raid, a kidnapping and murder case was filed against Palao in Marawi City by the family of Boratong's wife, Mimie. The case stemmed from the alleged kidnapping and killing of her brother.

Danger to main witness

Barias said the first division of the Supreme Court granted an Aidsotf request for Palao to be tried in Metro Manila.

But the decision was later overturned by the high court's third division, which said the case should be tried in Cagayan de Oro, Barias said.

"To our dismay, here's one branch of the Supreme Court saying it's OK, but [this was] reversed after a motion for reconsideration was filed," he said.

Barias contended that bringing Palao to Cagayan de Oro posed a danger to the state witness.

He also said that the Misamis court had already fined two police officers in the amount of P30,000 each for failure to bring Palao to Cagayan de Oro on Feb. 28 for his arraignment.

Let's stop rhetoric

"The PNP chief could be cited for contempt if Palao is not brought to Cagayan de Oro on March 15," Barias added.

Showing his dismay, Barias said: "We always come up with rhetorics, 'Let's help the police, help the government, help etc.,' but in this reality of the Boratong case, we are distracted by so many issues, particularly pronouncements that tend to weaken the case."

Secretary Gonzalez had ordered a reinvestigation of the case against Boratong, saying the evidence against him was weak.

Barias said he could not find any reason for Gonzalez to say that the evidence was weak when, in the first place, it was Gonzalez's own people at the DOJ who found enough evidence to prosecute the case.

"His saying that the evidence against Boratong is weak demoralizes his own people," Barias said.

Protecting Boratong

Gonzalez had also said that Palao was a "polluted" witness.

Talking with reporters in January, Gonzalez claimed that Palao could be working with the police to extort money from Boratong.

Barias had another lament.

"I find it ironic that an accused (Boratong) when going to court is protected by a throng of National Bureau of Investigation agents complete with bullet-proof vests, while the witness (Palao) who goes to court on his own accord is deprived of protection by his own government," he said.

Gonzalez ordered Palao dropped from the government's Witness Protection Program in December last year.

Barias said Palao was also a witness in a case before the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMCL).

"This is also a test case for the AMLC. [It] wants this case to prosper and Palao is also the material witness," he said.

He claimed more than P100 million worth of Boratong's property was being investigated by the AMLC.

"Where did the money to buy those properties come from?" Barias asked. *With a report from Inquirer Research*

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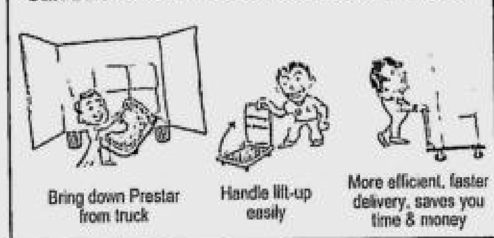

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Retired Comelec …

From page A1

retired government officials, professionals, IT specialists and members of the academe to ensure that the May 14 elections are credible, clean and transparent.

"I had a sense that cheating took place during the 2004 elections but I have no way of proving it because they took me out of Region 12," Sadain said.

He warns that "anything could happen" because "the structure is still there."

Sadain was part of the Comelec when the controversial Virgilio Garcillano was a member of the poll body.

Garcillano was the Comelec commissioner on the infamous "Hello Garci" tapes, the wire-tapped conversations between him and President Macapagal-Arroyo in which the President was heard asking about her lead over Fernando Poe Jr.

The opposition has claimed that the tapes showed that Ms Arroyo rigged the 2004 presidential election. The President has denied any wrongdoing.

Widespread

Sadain did not elaborate on his statement that the "system for possible widespread cheating" was still around but he said that his involvement with Halal was his way of acting on the things he could not do when he was still with the Comelec.

"We had our own respective tasks and areas of responsibilities. So a commissioner might not know what happened outside his assigned region," Sadain said.

Aside from Sadain, another prominent member of Halal is retired Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani, who along with Lt. Col. Alexander Balutan, testified in 2005 in a Senate inquiry into alleged fraud in the 2004 presidential election, especially in the Lanao provinces in Mindanao.

Gudani and Balutan are facing court-martial for violating instructions from their superiors then not to appear before the Senate inquiry.

Gudani said he chose to join the poll watch group over running for public office. He had been asked by leaders of the opposition to run for a seat in the Senate.

"I am sure that if I run for senator, I will get millions of votes from the Born Again sector, the military, the police and the areas where I was assigned as a military officer. But the question is, Will my million votes be counted in the crucial hours after the closing of the polling precincts?" he said. (Gudani is a member of Christ's Commission Fellowship.)

He said there was "simply no way" a poor person could win in this political culture.

Flexible

Gudani expressed concern about a statement by Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane that the military "will be flexible" in performing possible election duties.

Gudani pointed out that Ebdane's statement was the opposite of the earlier recommendation by former Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. that soldiers be stripped of their election duties. Cruz resigned last November over differences with certain Cabinet members on Charter change.

"Secretary Cruz was really bent on making sure the soldiers, from the rank and file to the highest levels, remained apolitical. Unfortunately, he's out of the DND (Department of National Defense)," Gudani said.

But Gudani acknowledged that the military was important in the transport of ballot boxes in provinces like Lanao del Sur where voters "have to walk six hours just to cast their vote."

Citizens' audit

Collecting and immediately posting the precinct-level election results are the primary focus of Halal, said another member of the group, IT specialist Roberto Verzola.

"The system that we have developed since May 2006 is simple and easily understood that any sector or group can participate," Verzola said.

Ermita seen sitting on Evardone case

By Norman Bordadora

IT SEEMS EXECUTIVE Secretary Eduardo Ermita is taking his sweet time signing the dismissal and permanent disqualification papers of National Printing Office director Felipe Evardone, brother of Team Unity media director and Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone.

Palace documents obtained yesterday by the INQUIRER showed Ermita's own deputy for legal affairs had concurred with the findings of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission recommending Evardone's dismissal based on two separate complaints involving graft and procurement violations.

In two memorandums sent to Ermita in February, Deputy Executive Secretary for Legal Affairs Manuel Gaite transmitted two draft decisions for the executive secretary's signature on behalf of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Both drafts ordered Evardone's dismissal and permanent disqualification from the government service.

The two cases involved complaints filed against Evardone by NPO suppliers he had discredited, namely, Eastland Printink Inc. and Bestforms Inc.

Evardone's dismissal in connection with Bestforms' complaint was recommended to Ermita on Feb. 15, while the dismissal related to Eastland's complaint was sent to the executive secretary on Feb. 26.

The Palace documents—furnished yesterday by sources familiar with the Office of the President's actions on the PAGC recommendations—seemed to belie Ermita's pronouncements that Gaite had yet to look over the PAGC findings after he went on leave "because of a death in the family."

"It's true that there was a death in the family but [Gaite] looked over the cases before he went on leave," one INQUIRER source, who sought anonymity for lack of authority to speak, said.

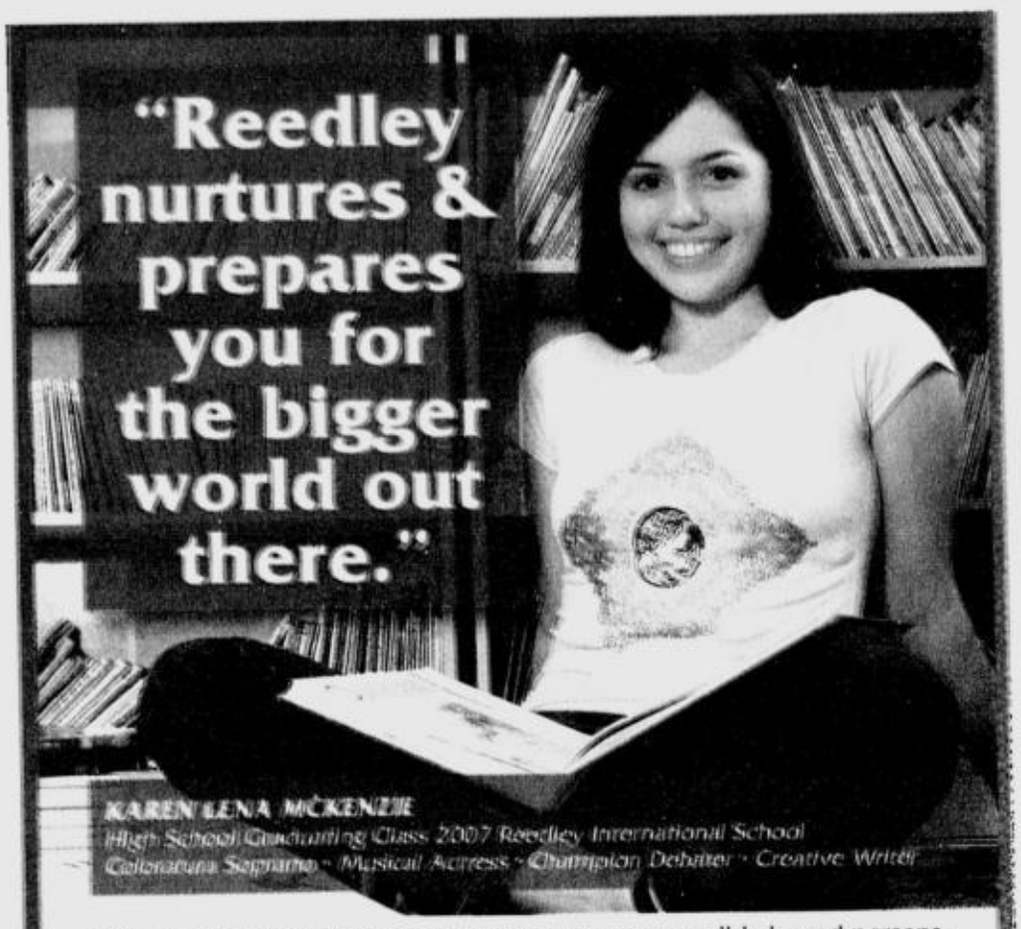
The NPO is mandated by law to print ballots and other election paraphernalia.

Whereas the NPO waived this mandate in past elections and subcontracted the printing of ballots, election returns and certificates of candidacy, Evardone said that this time, he worked for the NPO to exclusively print the election forms for the coming May polls. *(See related story on Page 1.)*

Evardone said he had taken a leave of absence from the NPO so as not to compromise the agency's credibility in light of his brother's appointment as Team Unity's media director.

Named in his place as officer in charge was Marietta de Guzman, chair of the NPO's bids and awards committee.

De Guzman, incidentally, is a co-respondent with Evardone in a case filed before the Ombudsman by Bestforms in connection with the allegedly anomalous award of a P91-million printing contract for the Bureau of Customs to a group of allegedly favored suppliers.



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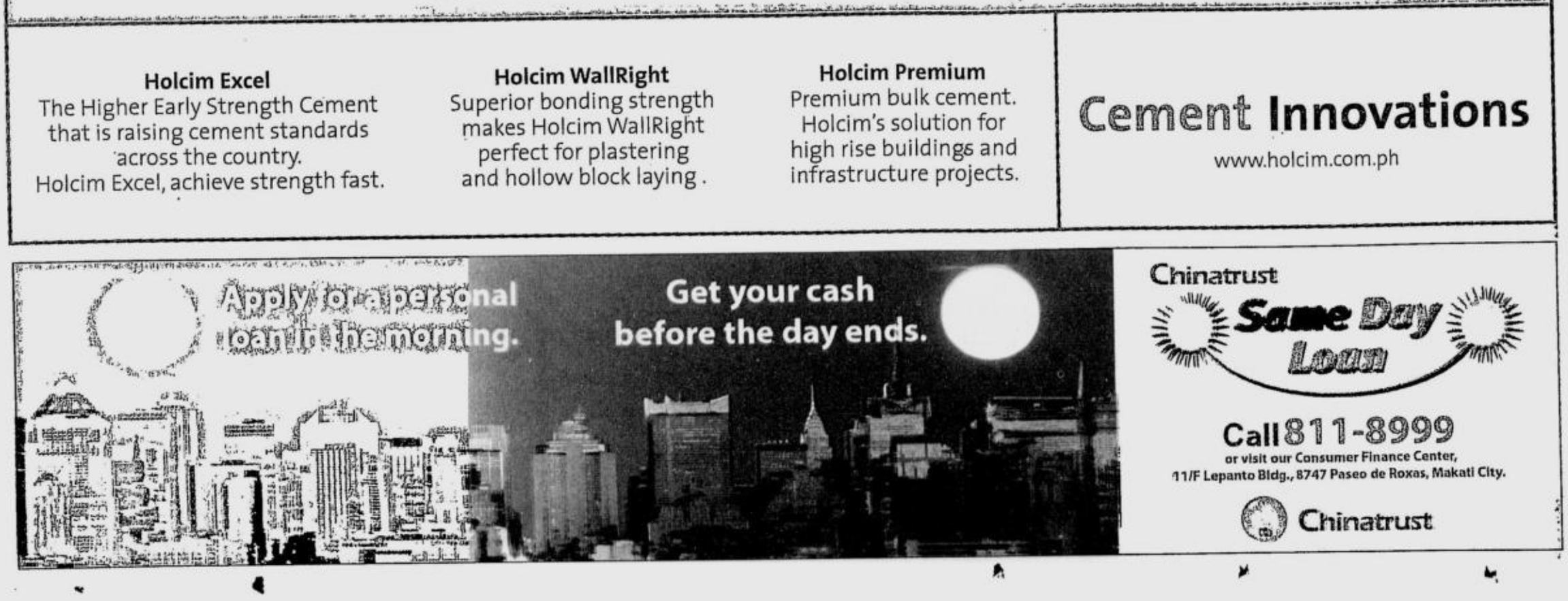


BIR receipt drive yields ...

From page A1

From June to August 2006, Teves reported that the Premyo-sa-Resibo campaign had resulted in the gathering by the BIR of some 7.8 million receipts covering about 140,000 establishments.

"Of these establishments, only 52.6 percent had valid TINs (Tax Identification Numbers). About 51.2 percent had no records of income tax payments with the BIR, while the rest had made only minimal income tax payments," Teves said.

He said the BIR Central Office had disseminated the information to the regional districts so they could conduct investigations and audits.

In light of the global donor community's challenge to sustain the fiscal turnaround, Teves said the government would further strengthen revenue collection by the BIR and the Bureau of Customs.

The government hopes to raise 14.3 percent more revenue this year than last year, with collections by the BIR and BOC programmed to rise by 17.5 percent and 15.2 percent, respectively.

TEVES: Premyo-sa-Resibo campaign should help strengthen the enforcement of tax laws.

"We are also fully implementing this year the Lateral Attrition Law. The respective revenue performance boards of the BIR and BOC have met and are now finalizing the guidelines on the distribution of rewards and application of sanctions," Teves said.

He also noted that the Department of Finance recently signed memorandums of understanding with the Department of Trade and Industry, Philippine Economic Zone Authority and the BIR to more clearly define the rules regarding income tax holidays and the 5-percent gross income tax.

Plugging loopholes

The memorandums will further tighten the implementation of the country's incentive laws by plugging some of the loopholes that result in system abuse and leakage, Teves said.

"The DOF will also audit the performance of the two collection agencies to identify and address weaknesses that hamper collection efficiency," he said.

"Since these tax administration measures may not have an immediate impact on collections, new measures may be needed to further improve our tax effort. To this end, we will continue working with Congress on revenue-enhancing measures, such as rationalizing fiscal incentives and restructuring income taxes," he said.

Teves also vowed to undertake a more proactive management of debt portfolio by taking advantage of opportunities to stretch maturity, reduce interest costs and rely more on the domestic market for financing requirements.

He said the DOF would get 67 percent of government financing from the domestic market and the balance from abroad.

"In addition, we expect our debt-to-GDP (gross domestic product) ratio to decline this year to 58 percent from 65 percent last year," the secretary said.

Teves also noted efforts to step up the sale of power and non-power assets. The government sold last week P25 billion worth of indirect shares in Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

"We are now working on the disposition of government's big-ticket items, specifically our shares in Meralco and San Miguel. We also continue to work with PSALM to accelerate the privatization of our gencos (generation companies) and TransCo," he said.

The government also assured the global donor community that it would tighten its watch on its corporate interests, by developing institution-specific performance contracts, starting with the National Food Authority.

"We are now discussing with AusAID (official development arm of Australia) the results of its study on the NFA and its recommendations," he said.

He said the Asian Development Bank was also working on similar performance contracts for the Light Railway Administration, Home Guaranty Corp., National Development Corp. and Philippine National Railways.

"In 2007, the consolidated public sector deficit should further narrow to P80.8 billion or 1.2 percent of GDP, due largely to the reduced national government deficit, the higher investment returns of our pension agencies and the improved fiscal position of our local government units," Teves said.

The PDF 2007 Meeting, cochaired by Teves and World Bank country director Joachim von Amsberg, was attended by delegations from Australia, Austria, Canada, China, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The international organizations that took part in the meeting included the Asian Development Bank, European Commission, International Monetary Fund, Kuwait Fund, Opec Fund for International Development, Saudi Fund for Development and various United Nations agencies.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, March 12, 2007
3rd Week of Lent

1st Reading: 2 K 5:1-15
Gospel: Luke 4:24-30

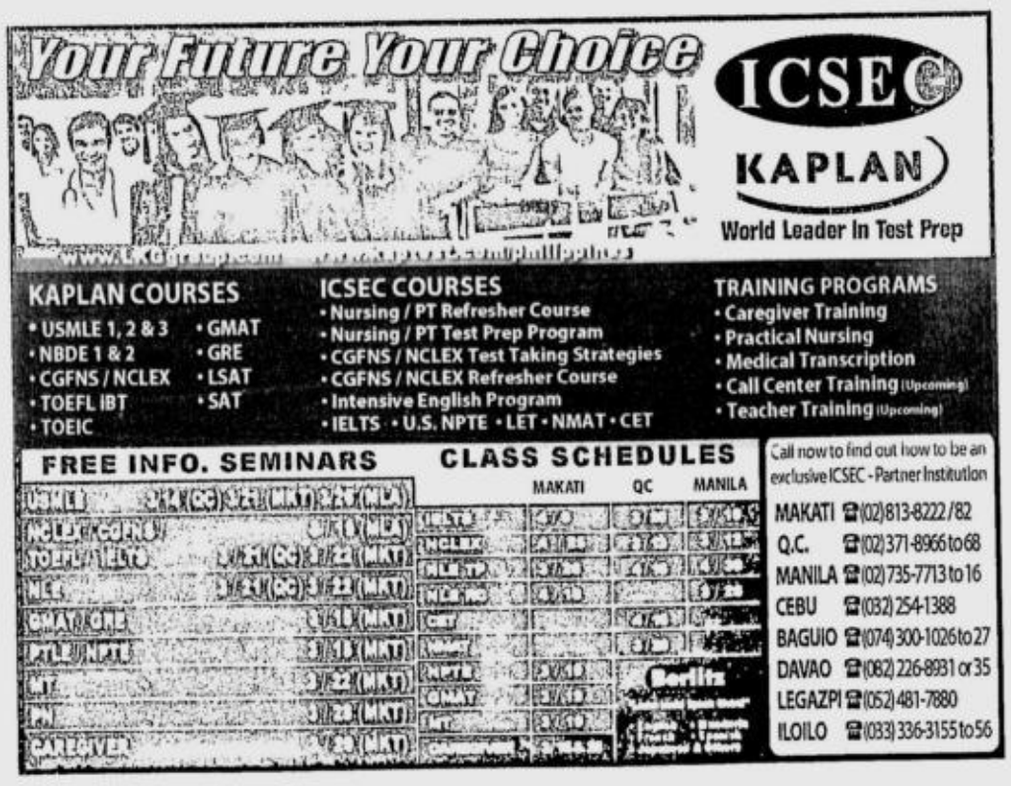
Jesus added, "No prophet is honored in his own country. Truly, I say to you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens withheld rain for three years and six months and a great famine came over the whole land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow of Zarephath, in the country of Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha, the prophet, and no one was healed except Naaman, the Syrian."

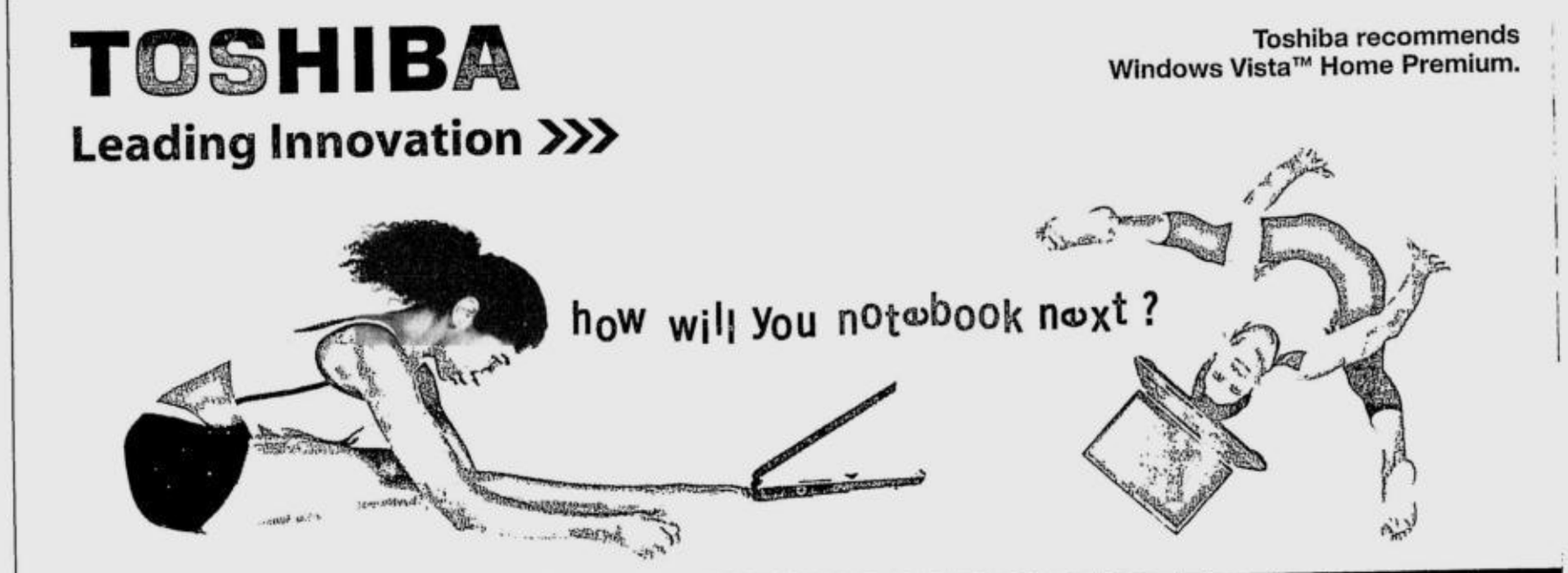
On hearing these words, the whole assembly became indignant. They rose up and brought him out of the town, to the edge of the hill on which Nazareth is built, intending to throw him down the cliff. But he passed through their midst and went his way.

Commentary

Naaman is an army commander, an enemy of Israel. But he is also a leper, and he is led by his servant girl (a captive in battle) to Elisha to be healed. Naaman learns to obey and as he does he is healed in the waters of the Jordan. His servants help him and he becomes like a child and believes, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel." An outsider who came to believe through the help of his enemy captive and a prophet.

Jesus, the prophet of God, preaches to his own family and neighbors in Nazareth but they refuse to take his words to heart. And he tells them that they are as hard-hearted as their ancestors, reminding them of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath, and Elisha and the Syrian Naaman. God worked his wonders through them though they were outsiders/pagans because God's own people were so stubborn. Jesus' listeners turn indignant and they try to kill him. But Jesus walks away from them. How long have we been close/kin/friend (or think we are) with Jesus and yet do we hear and repent? Or is Jesus walking away from us?





Saudi royals buying into Bohol resort

By Michael Lim Ubac

TAGBILARAN CITY—SAUDI ARABIA'S ROYAL family is buying up a chunk of Panglao Island in Bohol, where they intend to put up a six-star resort.

President Macapagal-Arroyo herself disclosed the news in a speech at the Bohol Youth Day celebration on Saturday at the Carlos P. Garcia Sports Complex here where she also rallied support for Team Unity senatorial bets.

The President made the disclosure to prove "the Philippines has regained world confidence because of its growing economy and stabilizing politics."

Ms Arroyo said the Saudi Arabian royal family, through its Kingdom Holdings, expressed their intention to invest $150 million in Panglao through a tie-up with Ayala Land.

"They would like to buy the whole Fonacier property to put up a six-star resort (to be administered by the) Raffles family," said the President to the delight of the crowd.

Businessman Anos Fonacier owns and runs the Bohol Beach Club on Panglao Island, one of the best dive sites in the country.

During her visit to Riyadh in May 2006, the President held talks with King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz and asked him "to recycle their profits from the oil trade into direct investments in the Philippines."

In Bohol, Ms Arroyo also announced the surge of Philippine exports to its highest level in seven years, adding that this indicated "the productivity and resiliency of the Filipino."

The President said the 27.3-percent export jump to $4.17 billion in January was achieved despite the continuing strength of the peso and the relative volatility of overseas markets.

The National Statistics Office reported Friday that key semiconductor and electronic shipments accounted for more than half of the total exports.

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Boracay traders' lament

BORACAY ISLAND, Aklan—Business owners here are pushing for the designation of a single authority to oversee the development and rehabilitation of this world-famous island.

The current situation is confusing, with the local and provincial governments, the Department of Tourism and the Philippine Tourism Authority, and other government agencies all implementing projects and policies on the island, said businessman Philippe Bartholomi.

Bartholomi is chair of the Boracay Chamber of Commerce Inc. (BCCI) executive committee which met with Tourism Secretary Joseph "Ace" Durano on Friday.

Bartholomi told the INQUIRER that while these agencies were working to develop the island, "this is not toward one direction."

Durano said he recognized the problem, but he told the business owners that "what is important is that all of us agree on a common agenda so our actions will complement one another."

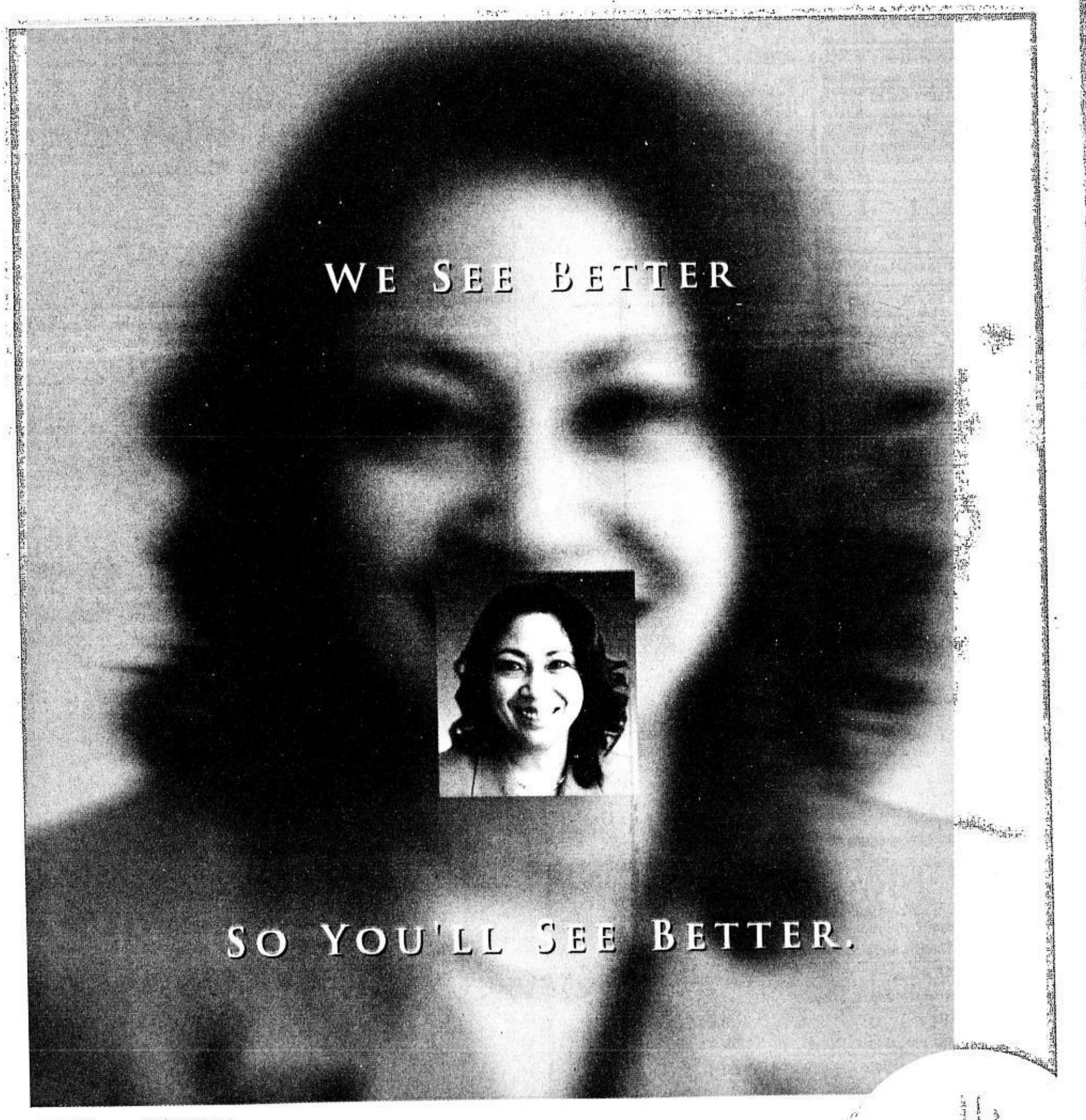
Later, he told the INQUIRER: "I sympathize with them and I understand why they feel the need for it [one direction]."

But he said the current situation was a reality the stakeholders had to live with.

During the meeting, Durano announced the crafting of a new master plan for the island, which he acknowledged was overcrowded.

The master plan will include wider roads and a drainage system, he said.

"But demolishing or starting from scratch, with all the development already in place, is impossible," he said, to allay the fears of local business owners the plan would affect their businesses. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*



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	29Apr-01May 3D/2N	219	04-06/18-20 May	185
Singapore	05Apr-08Apr 4D/3N	265		
Kuala Lumpur	05Apr-08Apr 4D/3N	285		
Boracay	Mar 30-Apr 1 3D/2N	P9450	Apr 13-15/27-29 3D/2N	P8300
	Apr 5-8 4D/3N	P11650	Apr 20-22 3D/2N	P9000

3N Shenzhen	109	2N Shenzhen+2N Shanghai	239
1N HKG + 2N Shenzhen or 1N Macau + 2N Shenzhen	149	1N Macau+2N HKG	299
2N HKG +1N Shenzhen	179	1N Macau+2N HKG+2N Shenzhen	318
2N Shenzhen +1N Macau	189	1N Shenzhen+3N Beijing +1N Macau	379
1N Macau+2N Shenzhen +1N HKG	199	2N Shenzhen+3N Beijing	389
1N Shenzhen+1N HKG +1N Macau or 3N Hongkong	209	2N Shenzhen+2N SHA+3N Beijing or 1N Macau + 1N Shanghai + 3N Beijing + 1N Shenzhen	399
1N Macau+1N HKG +1N Shenzhen	229	1N Shenzhen+2N SHA+3N Beijing +1N Macau	429

HONGKONG DISNEYLAND

2N Hongkong w/ Disney Day Tour	209
1N Hongkong + 1N Disneyland	259
2N Hongkong + 1N Disneyland	278
1N Macau+1N HKG+1N Shenzhen w/ Disney Day Tour	299
1N Macau+1N HKG+2N Shenzhen w/ Disney Day Tour	319

HKG Free & Easy 3D/2N	149	Jakarta 3N	248
Kuala Lumpur 3N	155	Macau 4D/3N	238
Bangkok 3N	163	2N Bkk + 2N Brunei 5D/4N	285
Kuala+Genting Highlands 4D/3N	188	Taipei 3D/2N	338
Singapore 3N	189	Singapore w/ Malaysia overland 6D/5N	383
Saigon 3D/2N	209	4-City (Singapore/Malaysia/Indonesia/Brunei) 5D/4N	359
3-City (Singapore/Malaysia/Indonesia) 4D/3N	235	Korea 5D/4N	709
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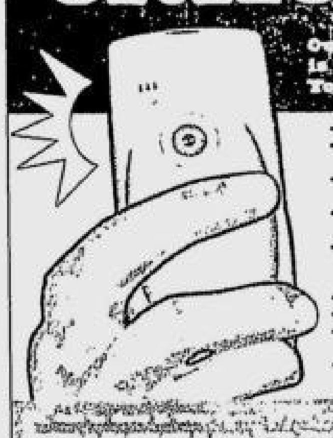

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C1B	Beijing, Shanghai, Guilin 6 - 8 Days	Tuesday, Thursday
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Oreta: I was treated badly by opposition, that's why I left

By Cynthia D. Balana

TAGBILARAN CITY—TEAM UNITY SENATORIAL candidate Tessie Aquino-Oreta bared her hurt feelings over the way she was cast aside by the Genuine Opposition (GO) in favor of her nephew, Benigno Noynoy Aquino III, with whom her relations are now apparently strained.

In a candid tell-all with reporters during a lull in the administration team's campaign sortie here, Oreta admitted she had felt bad seeing former President Joseph Estrada agonizing between choosing her or Noynoy for the senatorial lineup.

Estrada, the acknowledged leader of GO, did not fight for her, lamented Oreta, whose well-publicized jig during Estrada's 2001 impeachment trial helped trigger the public outrage that led to People Power II which toppled the then President.

"That was the thing that made me decide to get out because prior to that, *ako ang nandoon* (I was already in the Estrada camp) ... feeling *ko inaantay-antay si Noynoy* (I felt they were only waiting for Noynoy)," she said.

Oreta and Noynoy's mother, former President Cory Aquino, are on opposite sides of the political fence. Cory was one of the leaders of the revolt against Estrada.

Oreta told reporters she then talked to her nephew about the problem but he said he was not sure if the Liberal Party to which he belonged would align itself with the opposition because he was involved in putting up a so-called Third Force.

"I said, 'What?' *Sabi ko pinagtatabuyan na ako hindi pa pala kayo siguradong makikipag*-align. *Kawawa naman ako.* (They are casting me aside and yet your group is not even sure of aligning itself with the opposition. I was in a bad position.)

"So I called up President Erap. I said, sir, I will make it easy for you, *huwag na ho kayong mahirapan magdecision, ako na lang ho ang aalis* (you need not sweat over the decision, I will just leave)," she said.

Oreta said she felt bad Estrada did not stop her from leaving.

"Well, maybe I overrated myself in his esteem, I thought he would fight for me," Oreta said in Filipino.

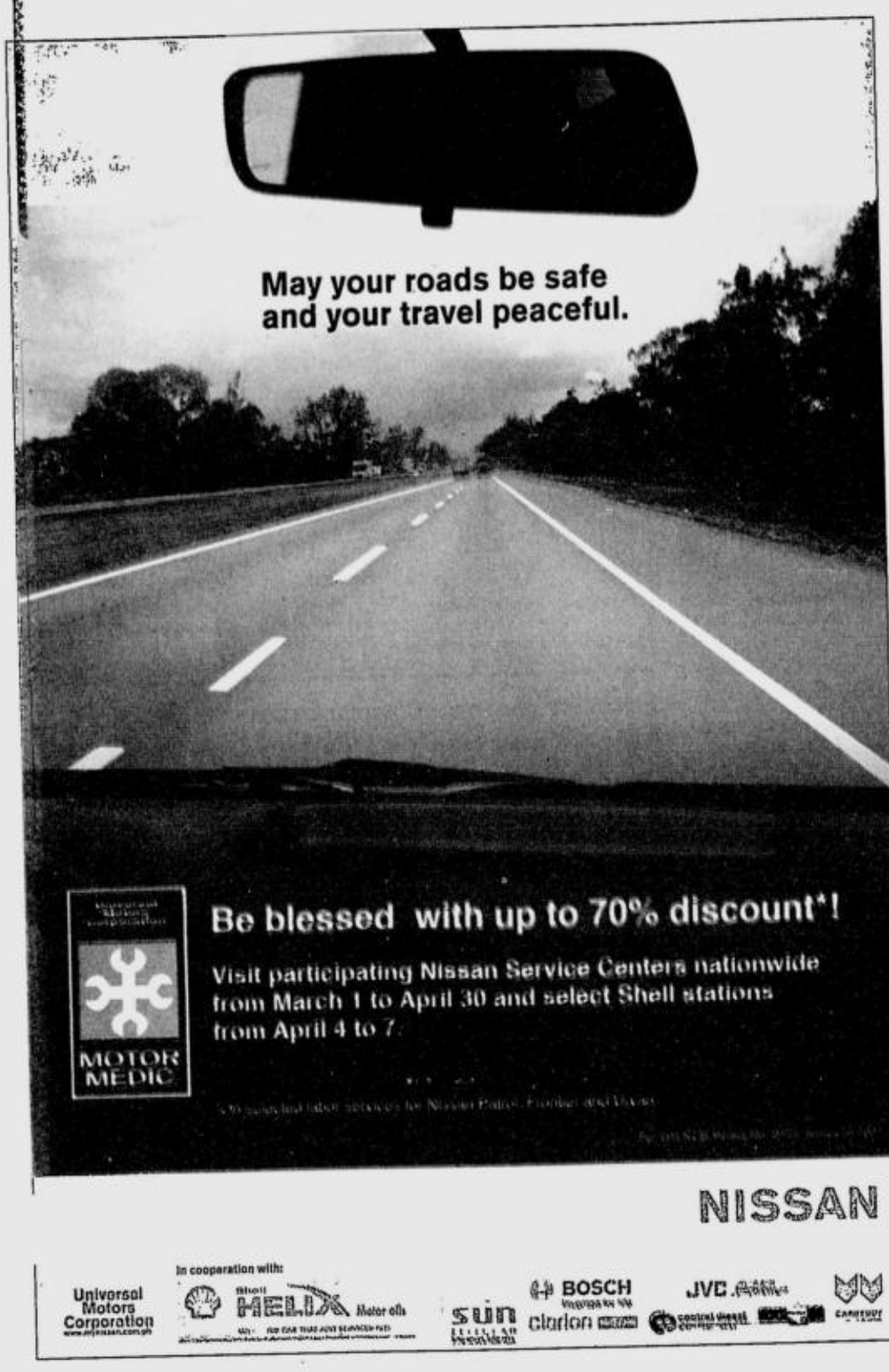
Regarding her relations with Noynoy, Oreta said she had not talked to him since early this year when the organization of a Third Force was being considered.

But in response to a statement reportedly made by Noynoy during a GO sortie in Batangas that he would ask the Commission on Elections to consider all "Aquino" votes in his favor, she said: "He can have it ... except when the ballots contain the names Tessie or Teresa Aquino."

In the past, she had used Tessie and Teresa Aquino as her names on the ballots.

If the ballot contains only the name "Aquino," I will not contest it, she said, adding: "*pwede na yun alang-alang na lang kay Ninoy* (I will let it go for Ninoy's sake)," referring to the slain opposition leader who was her brother and Noynoy's father.

But Oreta said that, in the end, it was the Comelec that would decide the matter considering that a Theodore Aquino was also fighting for his right to use the name if his appeal run for senator were granted.



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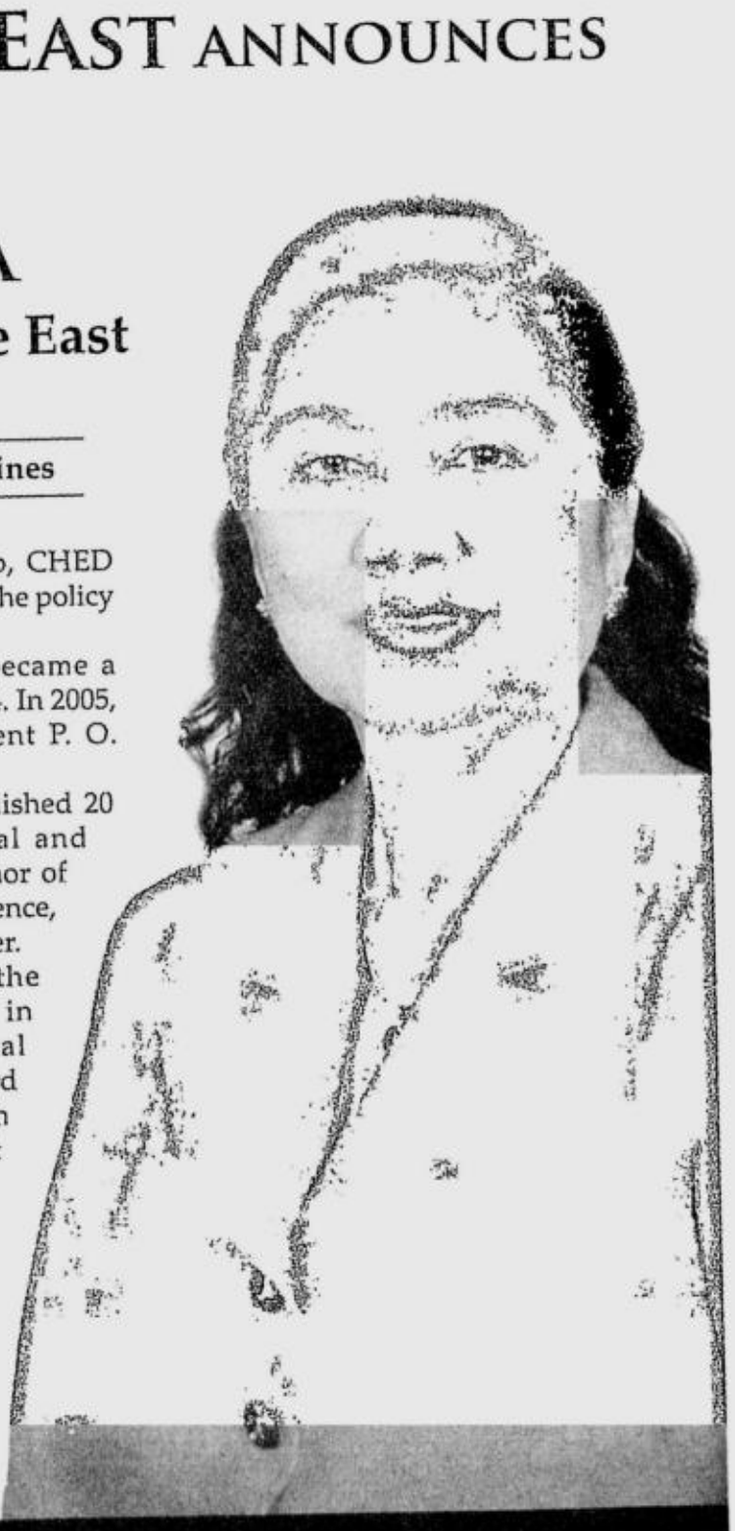

The appointment of Dr. Ester A. Garcia as President of the University of the East could not have come at a more meaningful time in UE's life, coinciding as it did with the University's celebration of its 60th Foundation Anniversary.

The third child of a medical doctor and a pharmacist, President Garcia had always been fascinated with Mathematics and Science. This fascination led her to her earning a BS Chemistry degree from the University of the Philippines, where she graduated cum laude in 1963. That same year, she topped the Philippine Board of Chemistry licensure examination.

She worked as a research aide in the International Rice Research Institute for a while before pursuing her doctorate degree at the Ohio State University. In 1969, she obtained her Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry, after which, she worked for one year as a post-doctoral fellow at the ICN Nucleic Acid Research Institute in Irvine, California. She was offered to work in the Chester Beatty Cancer Institute in London—an offer she turned down for personal reasons.

She has held various academic and managerial positions within the last four decades, mostly in UP.

However, President Garcia is best known among academicians for her stint at the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as Commissioner from November 1994 to July 1999 and Chair from July 1999 up to her retirement in May 2003. Under her leadership, CHED fortified its mandate, establishing among others the policy for autonomy in tertiary learning institutions.

After her retirement, President Garcia became a consultant for UE from August 2003 to July 2004. In 2005, Chairman and concurrently Acting President P. O. Domingo offered to her the UE presidency.

President Garcia has, as a researcher, published 20 scientific papers in peer-reviewed national and international journals, and is author or co-author of more than 120 papers on issues related to science, education, technology, environment and gender.

President Garcia is a recipient of the Outstanding Professional of the Year 1996 in Chemistry Award from the Professional Regulation Commission, an Achievement Award in Chemistry from the National Research Council of the Philippines and the Achievement Award in Chemical Education from the Philippine Federation of Chemical Societies. She also holds a Doctor of Laws degree, *Honoris Causa*, from the De La Salle University.

President Garcia is married to Dr. Jerrold J. Garcia, Chair of the Physics Department of the Ateneo de Manila University.

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ELECTION 07

Angara: Go easy on CPP-NPA terror tag

Pimentel's ma hits morality, dynasty raps

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LUCENA CITY—LIKE A PROTECTIVE MOTHER, Lourdes "Bing" Pimentel has defended her family from charges of lack of morals and creating a dynasty after her son, Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, joined the Senate race under the Genuine Opposition banner even as his father, Sen. Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr., was already member of the chamber.

"Morally wrong? What would be immoral are those acts that violate the Ten Commandments. *Nasa* Ten Commandments *ba na huwag tumakbo ang anak kung ang ama ay senador na ng bansa* (Do the Ten Commandments prohibit a son from running for the Senate if his father is already in it)?" Pimentel asked during GO's "Talakayang Bayan" (town meeting) held here last Saturday.

Article 2, Section 26 of the Constitution provides that the state shall guarantee equal access to opportunities for public service but prohibits political dynasties as may be defined by law.

Opponents of the political dynasty law argue the term "political dynasty" has not been properly defined and there is no enabling law to back it.

A party-list group, Alyansa Laban sa Dynastiya (Aladyn), is considering filing a case against senatorial candidates it believes are guilty of perpetuating political dynasties.

The group aims to derail the senatorial bids of Koko Pimentel, Alan Peter Cayetano and Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III of the Genuine Opposition and Teresa Aquino-Oreta of the administration's Team Unity.

Cayetano has a sister, Pia, already in the Senate while Aquino is the nephew of Aquino-Oreta.

Bing Pimentel also lashed out at her family's detractors for not including President Macapagal-Arroyo and her own family in the dynasty issue.

"Why are they sparing Malacañang and the dirty political games of President Arroyo? One of her sons [Juan Miguel] is already a congressman, her other son [Diosdado] will run for a Congress seat in Bicol even if he is not from the area and her brother-in-law [Ignacio] is also a member of Congress. Why is all this being ignored?" she said.

Pimentel, an educator, argued her point using the concept of "contemporary morality"—that what was viewed as immoral before is no longer considered "immoral" at present.

TAGBILARAN CITY—REELECTIONist Sen. Edgardo Angara yesterday said the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army, could not be considered terrorist organizations in the country unless there was a court declaration.

Speaking to reporters during a campaign sortie of Team Unity here, Angara said Defense Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor was merely giving his own view regarding the recently signed Human Security Act, otherwise known as the Anti-Terrorist Law, when he spoke of the possibility of the communist organizations being declared as such.

"The way I read the announcement of Blancaflor, he was asked if the NPA could be considered a terrorist organization. That requires a declaration from the courts. It is not automatic," he said.

The US state department has identified the CPP and NPA as a terrorist organization in its annual report on the patterns of international terrorism.

But Angara stressed that it was not automatic on the part of the Philippine government to follow suit.

Blancaflor, the director of the country's antiterrorism task force, had said that CPP-NPA guerrillas could be declared terrorists unless they stopped resorting to "terrorist" acts and started coming down from the hills.

He said the CPP-NPA had committed acts that fell under the definition of terrorism under the Anti-Terror Law that will take effect on July 14, or two months after the May elections.

The CPP was established in December 1968 and the NPA about three months later.

Blancaflor said several other groups, such as the Abu Sayyaf, could be classified as terrorist after the law takes effect.

Angara said total development, not war, was the best antidote to insurgency.

Citing Bohol as an example, Angara said the government's total support had completely wiped out insurgency in the province. *Cynthia D. Balana*

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OPINION

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The fugitive

IN THE 2001 ELECTIONS, THE NEWLY INSTALLED Arroyo administration sought to consolidate the gains of Edsa II by—among other means—campaigning for a sweep of the Senate race. The People Power Coalition (another temporary alliance, in the Philippine tradition of ad hoc electoral coalitions) pulled out all the stops to try to produce a 13-0 result. (A 13th seat was at stake, because Sen. Teofisto Guingona had been appointed Vice President.)

EDITORIAL

The PPC also allied itself with the most popular and best organized party-list organization at that time. As the latest SWS survey shows, those distinctions still hold true for Bayan Muna, but what a difference a legitimacy crisis makes.

Six years ago, the Arroyo administration welcomed Bayan Muna's lead nominee, Satur Ocampo, to its *miting de avance*. Today, the Arroyo administration, still in the throes of a crisis of legitimacy it likes to pretend has already been resolved, is maneuvering to put Ocampo behind bars.

Ocampo, a former communist rebel who has become the face of the legal, militant opposition, may surface today to file a petition with the Supreme Court. But we are certain that, even if he successfully extricates himself from the new charge filed against him, more charges lie in wait for him and his colleagues in leftist party-list groups.

First things first. Reports of Ocampo's involvement in the paroxysm of violence that rent the communist insurgency in the 1980s continue to circulate, some of them from former victims of the bloody purge. These are concerns Ocampo must answer, and answer convincingly.

But—the second point—the charge filed against him, Communist Party of the Philippines founder Joma Sison and scores of others, for alleged involvement in the mass murder of communist insurgents in Inopacan town, in Leyte, in 1985, is fatally defective. It is a charge rushed into existence or (worse) designed to fail, for a basic reason: Ocampo was in jail when the alleged mass murder took place. Not even the injudicious remarks of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, that mass murder can be plotted from inside a jail cell, can obscure the main basis of the charge: that a witness saw him in Inopacan at the time of the purge. Unless Ocampo has the gift of bilocation, the charge—accepted by a judge who did not read or chose to ignore the actual evidence—is essentially baseless.

Third: The charge and the arrest warrant against Ocampo did not materialize in a vacuum. Bayan Muna and associated party-list groups have suffered systematic harassment especially in the last two years. Hundreds of their members have been assassinated; they have been the targets of "saturation drives," especially those then led by the President's favorite general, Jovito Palparan; the chief of staff of the Armed Forces has launched "civil-military operations" in certain urban poor areas in Metro Manila to prevent leftist party-list groups from campaigning; and so on and so forth.

It is true that—and here is the fourth point—the congressional representatives of Bayan Muna, Anakpawis and Gabriela have not shied from using their pork barrel funds (something we have taken them to task for). But allegations from government officials and military officers that they have used these government funds to finance anti-government activities, or even to finance the communist insurgency, are unproven and unsubstantiated. This misuse of funds, if true, is treason of the highest order; but professional paranoiacs like National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales do not even offer any proof; like Goebbels, they put their faith in the repetition of lies and half-truths. A fatally flawed case like the Inopacan massacre does not increase public confidence but undermines it.

Lastly: The Ocampo case is, at bottom, a policy issue. Does the Arroyo administration, which embraced Bayan Muna in 2001 and again (although both sides will deny it) in 2004, now believe that the only way to defeat the insurgency is through military means? The idea behind the old policy was to invite former insurgents to trade the armed struggle for the parliamentary one.

We thought that policy worked, despite many shortcomings. So did the Arroyo administration—at least until the President's legitimacy crisis forced her to trade long-term peace for short-term survival.

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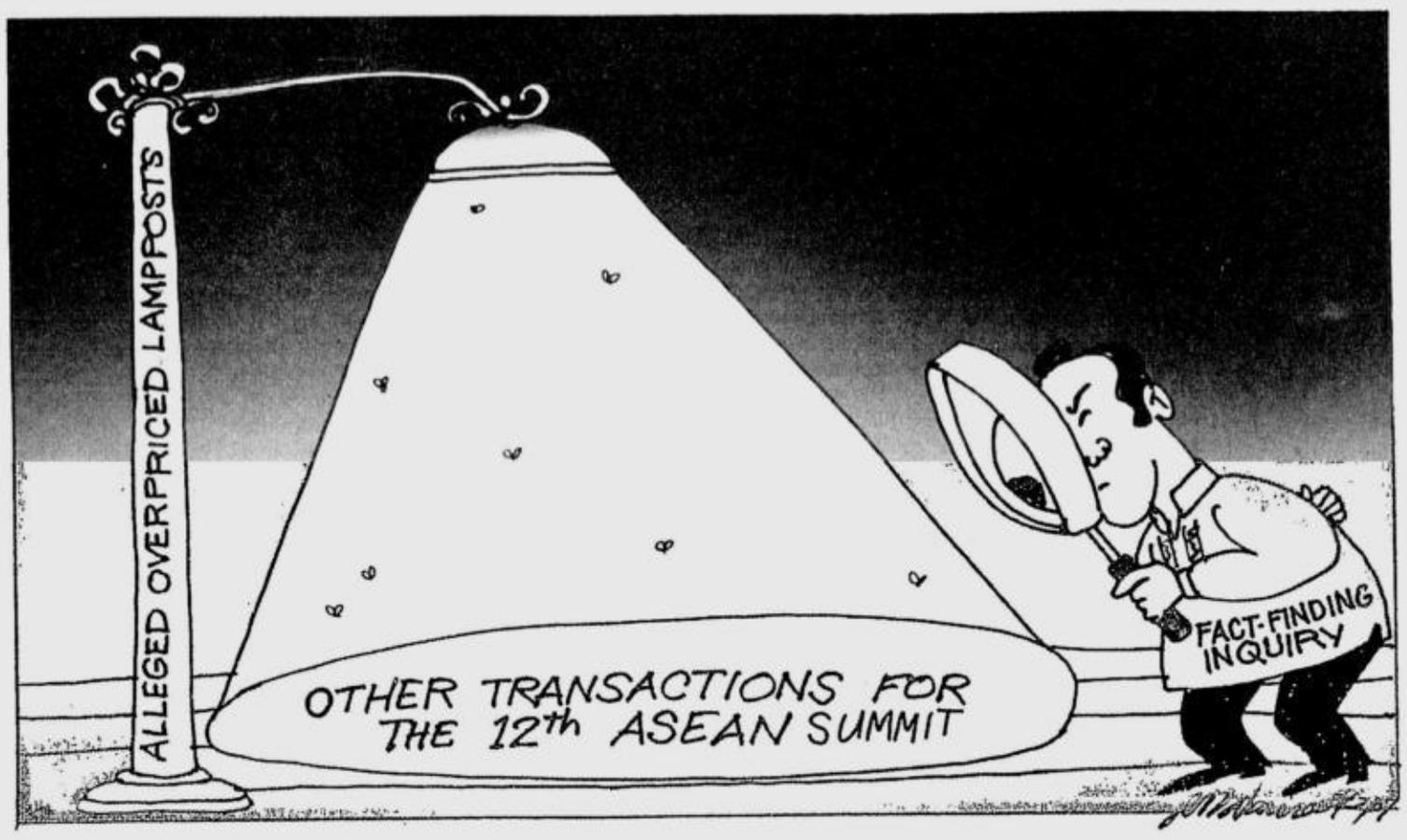


Napocor cheating electricity consumers

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE NATIONAL POWER CORP. IS CHEATING electricity consumers by not reducing power rates despite the strengthening of the peso and the lowering of fuel prices. Gasoline companies automatically slash gasoline, diesel and LPG prices with each drop in the price of crude oil and the rise in the peso exchange rate; why can't Napocor do the same with electricity rates? With each gain of the peso, Napocor saves on its dollar-denominated loan payments. And with each drop in the price of crude, Napocor saves on its fuel costs. (Some Napocor power plants are fueled by diesel.) So the cost of generating electricity goes down. Therefore, the price of electricity for the consumers should also go down. So why isn't this happening even though the price of fuel has been rolled back many times?

Because Napocor is cheating. How?

During the time of the Energy Regulatory Board, power rates were automatically adjusted to reflect the foreign exchange rates as well as the cost of raw materials used in power generation. When the peso depreciated in value against the dollar, electricity rates naturally went up. But when the peso appreciated, power rates went down. The ERB's automatic price adjustment system allowed power rates to go up or down depending on the current market prices, without need of public hearings. It was fair to consumers because they were billed according to market prices. And any gain in the peso-dollar exchange rate was immediately deducted from the amounts charged to consumers.

When the Energy Regulatory Commission replaced the ERB, the setup was changed. Napocor now has to apply for any rate adjustment, and lengthy hearings have to be held to determine if the adjustment is justified. That is, if Napocor applies for it. If Napocor does not, there can be no hearings, much less reduction in the rates.

Napocor is cheating consumers by simply not applying for rate adjustments or taking too long to apply. With every day that the adjustment is delayed, Napocor rakes in millions of pesos in profits it does not deserve. With the appreciating peso, our electricity rates, like the fuel prices, should have been regularly reduced since September 2005 when the peso started to recover. So how come we do not feel the peso gains through reduced power rates? How come we are still being billed for power rates based on the high peso-dollar exchange rate?

Because Napocor, instead of applying for a rate reduction, is claiming the windfall in exchange rates as profit. This windfall should go back to the consumers, but Napocor is passing it off as net profit.

Napocor reported a net income of almost P90 billion in 2006 due to hefty foreign exchange gains. In 2005, it reported a forex gain of P65 billion.

In the first place, the profit reported from forex gains is not real but merely artificial profit; it is not a result of better fiscal management. The gains do not rightfully belong to Napocor but to the Filipino consumers of electricity.

And any reduction in the price of raw materials for power generation should naturally result in the reduction of power rates.

Because of the delay in rate adjustments, consumers got only a token rate cut of about 31 centavos per kilowatt-hour. The reduction should have been P2/kWh, or P400 based on a 200-megawatt monthly electricity consumption.

The ERC has urged Napocor to file a new application for incremental currency exchange rate adjustment (Icera). This should give consumers a rate cut of P2/kWh to reflect the P90-billion net income it claims.

ERC Chair Rodolfo Albano said Napocor's deferment of the accounting of forex gains works against the interest of Filipino consumers who have been shortchanged and have to wait longer for rate cuts.

Napocor president Cyril del Callar is gloating over Napocor's P90-billion net profit, but this is from the blood, sweat and tears of the overseas Filipino workers pump-priming the economy and the peso-dollar exchange rate. The money should go back to the consumers, not to Napocor.

Electricity distribution firms like Meralco and the electric cooperatives are being blamed for the delay in the reimbursements. What many do not know is that distribution firms and cooperatives are merely collection utilities and have no authority to tell Napocor to adjust its rates. Also, the distribution firms are not automatically reimbursed for rate cuts they have already implemented. It usually takes them 46 months to be reimbursed by Napocor.

Now you see why Napocor officials refuse to privatize the state firm. With huge forex gains every year, gains that do not rightfully belong to Napocor but to the Filipino people, who can stop the Napocor mafia from using every trick to prevent the privatization of the power firm?

But the ERC should not wait for Napocor to move. It should put a stop to the injustice being done to electricity consumers—by setting up an automatic rate adjustment mechanism. Like the old one. Without any need for Napocor to initiate the application for rate reduction.

* * *

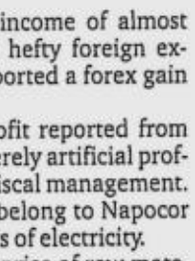
Businessmen are having a difficult time getting senatorial candidates to participate in its public debates on election issues. Administration candidates are eager to join the debates but opposition candidates are not.

Naturally. If you are behind in the opinion polls, as the Team Unity candidates are, you will jump at every chance of public exposure. But if you are already ahead like the opposition candidates, why will you participate in the debate? You have nothing to gain and everything to lose in such an event. You never know what surprise the other side will spring on you.

On the other hand, the losing candidates have nothing to lose and everything to gain in such debates.

Murder most foul

THERE'S THE RUB



Conrado de Quiros

LET ME BE CLEAR: I PERSONALLY WELCOME the authors of the "killing fields," or communist purges, being prosecuted and punished severely where they are found guilty. I've held that position from the very beginning. Some of my friends are either survivors of those purges or the kin of the dead, and I am an ardent supporter of their quest for justice. We can no more turn a blind eye to those killings, or dismiss them as just the internal, if lethal, intramurals of the enemy, and which probably do the community a service, than we can to the killings that have been happening plentifully in our midst over the last several years.

Having said that, I protest most vehemently the arrest warrant on Satur Ocampo. That is an abomination that has no right to exist in a country pretending to be a democracy. Indeed, in a country pretending to have elections.

What's wrong with it is—everything.

At the very least its timing sucks.

The arrest warrant comes at a time when the international community has been loudly condemning the killings in the Philippines. Philip Alston and the Melo Commission have directly attributed those killings to military elements—the Melo Commission has expressly named Jovito Palparan. They have further raised the issue of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's culpability in them.

The arrest warrant against Ocampo is clearly an attempt by the government to hijack the public's attention away from it. While at the same time selling that idiotic idea, which it has maintained throughout the Alston and Melo investigations, that it's the NPA and not the military that is responsible for the killings, presumably in continuation of the purges. Whether or not the police actually serve the warrant against Ocampo, the mere fact of issuing it allows the government to press this point, or at least—since it cannot seriously expect to persuade a cynical public to buy it—to muddle the issue and take some of the sting out of the global opprobrium over the killings.

Well, it won't. The generals and their boss won't get off so easily with the murder of journalists and political activists. The order of priority is clear enough. First, prosecute them; then, and only then, the authors of the communist purges. The reason for that is simple. It is not merely that the mind-boggling scale of the killings of journalists and political activists makes the NPA "killing fields" look like little-league gangland murders. It is also that we pay taxes to government; and with the EVAT in particular, through our nose. We have a right to demand justice from it, we have a right to demand our rights from it. At the very least, we have a right to demand not to be murdered by it.

But more than that, its substance sucks.

Certainly, it does not help the government's case that Ocampo was in jail at the time the "killing fields" in Leyte took place. The AFP says it has witnesses who swear Ocampo sanctioned the killings even while he was in jail. I'll leave them to debate that point, though the quality of the military's witnesses against its favorite bogeyman isn't its strongest suit. My own point is this:

If Ocampo is guilty of the crime by command responsibility, and an arrest warrant may be issued against him for it, why can't we issue an arrest warrant against GMA for precisely the same reason? In Ocampo's case, you still have to prove that he was a leader of the communist movement and exercised his power at all times. In GMA's case, well, you do have to prove as well—or she must—that she is the president, but you can be absolutely certain, since she has left no doubt about it, that she has wielded the powers of the president at all times.

Did she know about the killings? Yes. Was she in a position to stop the killings? Yes. Did she stop the killings? No. Guilty, by virtue of command responsibility.

Why in hell is there an arrest warrant for Ocampo and none for GMA?

Or for that matter, against Jovito Palparan? The guy never kept his murderous intent against the enemy, combatant and non-combatant alike, secret. In fact, he boasted about it telling civilians sorry *na lang* if they happened to be in the line of fire. He has been named as a definite culprit by the Melo Commission. You want to arrest Ocampo for mass murder and not him?

The selective perception is breathtaking. "Impunity" is the word the Reporters Without Borders used to describe the ease with which this country's official butchers butcher journalists and political activists. It is the word Alston and the US government have used as well to condemn the killings. Well, it's not just that this country's official butchers are able to murder with impunity, it's also that they are able to ascribe their crime to others with impunity.

But what truly galls about all this is that it is being done in the middle of the electoral campaign. The arrest warrant against Ocampo and the invasion of schools and slum areas by the military (which I will write about tomorrow since no one seems particularly incensed by it) are also meant to divert the public's attention from something just as important, if not more so, than the unabated killings in this country and who are responsible for them. That is what these elections are all about and who the real threat to democracy is. The arrest warrant against Ocampo sends the message that these elections are about democracy vs. communism, and the threat to democracy is posed by people like him. In fact, the equation is simpler. These elections are about legitimate vs. illegitimate rule and the threat to democracy is posed by the cheaters. There is no bigger crime against elections than stealing the vote. There is no bigger threat to democracy than stabbing the voter in the back. That is murder most foul.

Neither the butler nor Ocampo did it. GMA did.

Churchmen and politics (Part 2)

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

Should the clergy limit themselves to teaching general moral ideas, or may they advocate specific political actions?

FOR ME, THE SIMPLEST AMONG THE QUESTIONS is whether a member of the clergy, particularly one who runs a parish or a diocese, should run for public office. Constitutionally, the prevailing view is that there is no constitutional obstacle for a cleric running for office. As to the obstacle arising from Canon Law prescription, it is not insurmountable. What remains, therefore, is a question of prudence or propriety. My view on this is that combining public office and religious ministry can strain Church-State relations and community unity. I would therefore follow the principle that one must choose between being fully a church minister or a public official. Combining the two can be both religiously and politically unhealthy.

Another important question touches on the substance of preaching by the clergy and religious. By preaching I do not simply refer to sermons and homilies in church. I include any public or semi-public pronouncements.

Should the clergy and churches limit themselves to teaching general moral ideas, or may they advocate as conclusions specific political actions? Certainly no one will deny the clergy the right to preach about morality. That is their task and they would be remiss in their duties if they habitually avoid moral issues. Thus, no one should deny them the right to discuss publicly whether abortion is moral or immoral, or that the rich should or should not help the poor, or that employers should or should not pay workers a living wage, or that homosexual acts are or are not sinful, or that wars are or are not morally wrong. This is all part of ordinary religious preaching.

It is a different matter, however, when out of general moral teachings, specific public positions are advocated—such as impeachment, Charter change, or even the closure of videoke bars. Of course, there are specific conclusions that flow naturally from general positions. For instance, if a priest believes that consensual sexual acts of homosexuals done in the privacy of their bedrooms are not harmful to the public, the natural conclusion will be that they should not be criminalized. But specific practical conclusions do not always come out naturally. The fact that an act is clearly sinful does not lead to the easy conclusion that it should be penalized. If it were, our prisons would be more crowded than they already are.

Why is it that people sometimes do not want their religious leaders to tell them what specific actions they should take or what political conclusions they should make? I believe that it is all part and parcel of being a citizen of a democracy. "I have my own mind. Don't insult me. Let me draw my own conclusion!" This is a perfectly legitimate attitude. To avoid alienating people who have such an attitude, a cleric must carefully and respectfully present his conclusions. If the practical conclusions are presented as the product of one's own study and are presented for people to agree or disagree with, then no one should feel insulted or offended.

Another objection to specific pronouncements by clerics is that their competence and their access to needed facts for drawing conclusions are limited. Rarely is their expertise related to economics, law, sociology, or politics, etc. But specific conclusions about the morality of economic or political decisions can depend very much on the dynamics and nuances of these specialized fields. If the cleric has competence in these fields, then his conclusion can be more persuasive. But it is also good to remember that the people whose task it is to make important decisions that impact on the lives of people, e.g., lawmakers, do not always have the needed expertise on what they may be talking about. Some lawmakers easily talk through their hat. But this is no reason for a cleric to be reckless.

While a cleric, however, should not be reckless in his statements, neither should he be inordinately pusillanimous. There are political and economic decisions that have great moral significance. These should be faced, with prudence, yes, but not with cowardly avoidance of conflict. Risks are part of the apostolic mission.

Clerics do make mistakes, out of carelessness perhaps, or through excess of zeal or even for more foolish reasons. But in my own estimate, mistakes and all, a courageous stand of clerics and churches do more good than harm. The courage of the churches in the Philippines has made significant contributions to improving our economic and political life.

Sincerity

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Carlos Isagani T. Zarate

"TO SERVE THE PEOPLE." THIS IS PROBABLY the most worn-out catchphrase coming from candidates—neophytes and veterans, administration and opposition—as they try, with great effort, to make people believe their reason for spending millions of pesos just to be elected. True or not, we cannot judge a candidate solely on the basis of what we see in very expensive ads (now flooding the TV screens) or in posters and other campaign materials (littering the streets).

But I knew one person who seriously lived out this commitment all through his life, without much fanfare. He was never a candidate for a political position. He "served the people" and served them well. And, probably, it was because of his dedication to serve the people that he was killed.

Renato "Ka Atong" Pacaide, 53, was buried last Friday in Digos City, Davao del Sur. The night before, a Luksang Parangal was held in his honor by members of progressive groups in the Davao region.

Ka Atong was killed March 2 by two hooded cowards on board a motorcycle, who shot him infront of his stepdaughter and a month-old grandchild, on a street in Digos City. Apparently, to make sure they would be able to kill him, the murderers pumped four bullets into his head, chest, shoulder and abdomen.

At the time of his death, Ka Atong was the provincial coordinator of the progressive party-list group Anakpawis in Davao del Sur. He became the 78th victim of extrajudicial killings in Southern Mindanao since 2001.

When Prof. Philip Alston, the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings went to Davao City last Feb. 18, Ka Atong was among those who facilitated things so that witnesses and survivors would be encouraged to give their testimony. He probably had no inkling that in helping the survivor of the Feb. 8, 2004 Bulane massacre in Matan-ao, Davao del Sur, he himself would become a victim of another summary killing.

But, knowing his firm commitment, I'm sure no threats on his life could have stopped him from serving the farmers' causes in Davao del Sur, which until now is still dominated by big landlords. Indeed, Ka Atong's whole life was devoted to his causes. He started as a student activist at the Holy Cross of Davao College during the so-called First Quarter Storm in the '70s. At the height of the Marcos dictatorship, he became a peasant organizer and remained so even after Edsa I. Until his death, he was the secretary general of the Nagkahiusang Mag-uuma sa Davao del Sur (Namadds), a peasant group affiliated with the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas.

To his colleagues, Ka Atong's death is yet another proof that there is a campaign being waged to "neutralize" leaders and members of leftist organizations and anybody perceived to be "enemies of the state." Despite the findings of Alston, the Melo Commission and, lately, of the US State Department, the Arroyo administration is apparently not going to lift a finger to stop the political killings; on the contrary, it has chosen to go into a "state of almost total denial" regarding the murders.

So far, the only concrete government response to the wave of killings came not from the executive department but from the Supreme Court, which has designated special courts to try cases involving the summary killings of activists, journalists, lawyers and human rights workers.

This early, though, many—even in legal circles—doubt whether these special courts would serve as deterrents to the killings. Indeed, unless the Arroyo administration takes a direct hand and adopts credible measures to prevent further bloodletting, protect the witnesses and prosecute the perpetrators, this recent move of the high court will just be an exercise in futility.

Question: Is the Arroyo administration sincere in its effort to tackle the problem? It must be remembered that the prosecution of cases on extrajudicial killings depends largely on institutions under the executive department: from the gathering of evidence to the actual filing of cases and their prosecution.

The Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG) raises the following questions to test the government's sincerity:

- Will the police, or even the National Bureau of Investigation, dare to gather evidence against soldiers if a murder trail points to the military?
- The military blames the leftists for the killings. Will the police have the grit to say otherwise and take action? Will the police, being part of the executive branch, really act in these cases without a clear and firm signal from the Chief Executive herself? For example, will the police investigate retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan whom the President presented during her Sona as "Exhibit A" of an outstanding officer?
- And if the police do gather evidence, will the prosecutors file the proper charges and actively prosecute the accused in court? Will Raul Gonzalez, the head of the Department of Justice who seems to share the military view on who are responsible for the extrajudicial killings, honestly pursue the filing and prosecution of the cases? Or, will the DOJ dilly-dally or refrain from prosecuting cases—especially those involving "privileged" suspects—in the same manner that the administration tried to suppress the Melo Report? Will the DOJ file cases pursuant to Alston's findings?
- Who will provide security for the families of the victims and for the witnesses?

Judging from its recent pronouncements, it seems certain that the Arroyo administration will rather pursue its "all-out war" on its perceived enemies than give justice to Ka Atong and the hundreds of other victims like him.

* * *

Comments at kar_laws@yahoo.com or karlos_z23@hotmail.com

Price of conviction

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, LEGISLATURES HAVE been jealously protective of the independence of their members. Parliaments and congresses have generally been quick to resist and condemn police power—and those who command that power—whenever wielded by the executive branch against them and their members on the principle that "when the guns speak, the law falls silent." The principle includes lawmakers whose only armament, more often than not, is making noise.

The most famous and cautionary tale about legislatures involves King Charles I of England who antagonized Parliament when he tried to dissolve it. In response, Members of Parliament (MPs) physically pinned down the Speaker of the House as he was about to transmit the King's order; they then locked Parliament's doors to continue their debate, and the King retaliated by locking up some MPs.

In 1641, informed that Parliament was poised to impeach his Queen, Charles I decided to arrest five members of the House of Commons. The King barged into the Commons with an armed guard, but the MPs he wanted to apprehend had fled. Humiliated, the King left London. Parliament raised an army. By 1642, the King had raised his own, and the English Civil War became inevitable. It ended with Charles' execution and Parliament's pyrrhic victory which ushered in the dictatorship of Oliver Cromwell.

When President Marcos heard Congress might challenge his proclamation of martial law, he had the legislative building seized by soldiers and the Senate padlocked. He then rushed the ratification of a new constitution to consolidate his rule.

During the effort to impeach then Chief Justice Hilario Davide, there was the real possibility that the Supreme Court might hand down a restraining order on the House. This could have led to a situation where the executive would have to order the police to shutter the House. Faced with this possibility, Speaker Jose de Venecia, in one unquestionable act of statesmanship, delivered an impassioned, extemporaneous speech that successfully headed off a constitutional crisis.

In 1989 and 2001, the executive ordered the apprehension of legislators accused of participating in plots to overthrow the government. In both instances, members of Congress expressed unease with such orders, though generally favored by public opinion because violence had hit the streets.

In 2005, there was an attempt to arrest House members. The Speaker intervened and offered sanctuary to the congressmen in danger of arrest. Except in the case of Rep. Crispin Beltran, who was placed under hospital arrest and remains in detention to this day, the will of the executive was thwarted. The case against them collapsed in court. The Constitution grants legislators immunity from arrest only when Congress is in session, and for crimes that carry a penalty of six years' imprisonment or less. So why then, did the Speaker insist on providing the congressmen with sanctuary within the House's premises? The reason was basic. Whatever the criticisms against him, the Speaker has shown a conscious appreciation of the limits that Congress, as an institution, has to insist on in the face of the police power wielded against it.

Sec. 40, Chapter 10 of the Administrative Code of the Philippines states: "All public officers and employees of the government including every member of the armed forces shall, before entering upon the discharge of his duties, take an oath or affirmation to uphold and defend the Constitution; that he will bear true faith and allegiance to it; obey the laws, legal orders and decrees promulgated by the duly constituted authorities; faithfully discharge to the best of his ability the duties of the office or position upon which he is about to enter; and that he voluntarily assumes the obligation imposed by his oath of office, without mental reservation or purpose of evasion..."

We forget that whatever our opinions may be about the ideological positions of certain representatives, they have taken an oath as public officers. It is an oath that the vast majority of the citizenry never have taken, and never will take. Since the government loves to harp on the "presumption of legality" to the extent it makes me want to scream, then it is duty-bound to respect the same when it comes to its enemies who hold public office.

But the case of Rep. Satur Ocampo, they say, has nothing to do with his conduct as a legislator; they accuse him of complicity in many murders. Ocampo's partisans, of course, insist the charges are trumped-up; that as a beneficiary of a past amnesty, he is immune from being charged with newly discovered crimes.

I believe that the charges are so grave, and their implications so serious for the movement and ideology he has at one time or another been identified with, that he must face them squarely and under whatever circumstances, fair or not, that a trial may play out.

To do otherwise is to permit the blurring of the line between those who share his ideology but work within the political system, and those who pursue armed struggle. And the more blurred that line becomes, the greater the peril to his fellow activists who are armed with the very same weapon he possesses: mere words.

The only reason the police have the nerve to violate the Bill of Rights and barge into Ocampo's house under the pretext of serving a warrant of arrest is that Congress is no longer in session—and institutionally, the House can't stand up for one of its own. That—and a reality neither Ocampo nor his supporters are prepared to admit: if the government is haunted by its human rights record, so is the CPP-NPA-NDF. The courage of Ocampo as a person and an ideologue is beyond question; in which case, he must adopt the strategy of Fidel Castro, and face his accusers in the dock and say, "History will absolve me."

Davide at UN

FORMER SUPREME COURT CHIEF JUSTICE HILARIO Davide Jr. is now our Permanent Representative to the New York-based United Nations. He presented his credentials last week to UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon.

My spy in New York reports that Davide is soon to be named one of the vice presidents of the Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc). An official announcement from the UN to this effect is forthcoming. This should put to rest all the talk and media reports implying that we could lose this prestigious post if the country failed to keep former Ambassador Lauro Baja Jr. at the UN.

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

Incidentally, I got a second letter from Baja. Our readers will recall that in his first letter, Baja declared "To be clear, I am not one of those officials wanting to stay on. . ." In his second letter, Baja does a turnaround saying "I requested the President and the Secretary of Foreign Affairs for a short extension of my term of duty . . . for considerations of national interest." He was apparently referring to the vice-presidency of the Ecosoc.

While this request was pending, his drumbeaters in Manila were lobbying with members of Congress for a resolution to keep him in his post. If media reports were accurate, they succeeded in getting 60 signatures on that resolution, although one can never be too sure about signatures. The same people also sought the intervention of His Eminence Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales by getting him to write the President on Baja's request to stay on. These appeals to Congress and to a Prince of the Church represented a double-barreled shotgun aimed at pressuring the executive branch to grant his wish for an extension. In our society, wives, *ninongs* and *ninangs, compadres, balaes* and prominent province mates are often used to intercede for public officials seeking a promotion, a new assignment or a continued stay in an old post. This is part of the culture of the land. What makes the Baja case different is that here the individual concerned is proudly proclaiming that "I am not one of those officials wanting to stay on" while his supporters work on the opposite objective.

The decision-makers made a good choice naming the decent, highly-respected former chief justice as the country's representative at the UN.

Kudos to Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo for staying the course on this issue in the face of the tremendous pressures exerted to keep Baja at the UN.

* * *

As of this writing, the Armed Forces of the Philippines is ruled by Tolentinos. The Army commander is Lt. Gen. Romeo Tolentino. The Air Force chief is Lt. Gen. Horacio Tolentino. And the Navy is led by Rear Adm. Amable Tolentino. All three come from the island of Luzon but from different provinces. They are not related to one another. Along with the AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., all belong to PMA class 1974.

* * *

More news for senior citizens.

In my last column, I mentioned that Mercury Drug, the largest distributor of medicines nationwide, had agreed to honor the 20-percent discount granted to senior citizens using credit card. Prior to this agreement, Mercury granted discounts only for cash payments. Last week, I was able to confirm this arrangement when I used my credit card for purchases at the Kamuning branch of Mercury. Several of my friends also mentioned that they were able to use their credit cards with the 20-percent discount intact.

However, one of my classmates from the Philippine Air Force Flying School was not too happy. The Mercury branch in Ayala Alabang still refused to give him a 20-percent discount on a purchase paid through credit card. I advised him to ask for the manager of the branch because it was possible that the clerks servicing the customers were not aware of the new arrangement, or were not given clear instructions, or were simply being stubborn.

If any of our senior citizens still have similar problems at Mercury or any drugstore, Trade Secretary Peter Favila has advised us to immediately report these to the DTI Direct Call Center through Tel. No. 751-33-30 and to tell the center the name of the establishment and that of its manager. Let me repeat—if Mercury Drug, or Commander Drug or Commodore Drug or any other drugstore would still refuse to honor your credit card with the 20-percent discount, dial 751-33-30 and make a claim.

Once again, we wish to thank Vice President Noli de Castro and his people, particularly his chief of staff Jessie Andres, for sorting out this problem and making sure that the provisions of the law, the Expanded Senior Citizens' Act, are implemented properly and enforced.

* * *

On another subject also of interest to senior citizens: Last week, I had a long conversation with Secretary Favila and we discussed problems concerning the seniors' 20-percent discount on food items, particularly in restaurants.

From my personal experience, there is no uniform manner for inputting the 20-percent senior citizens' discount when the bill is presented to them.

Some restaurants would first total the cost of the food and beverages and apply the 20-percent discount to this amount. Others would total the cost of the food and beverages plus the VAT, other taxes and service charges, and then apply the 20-percent discount to this higher figure.

A. Example of the first method:
Food: P840
Beverage: P160
Total: P1,000
Less: 20% discount: P200
Total: P800
Add: 12% VAT: P90
and service charge: P70
Total check: P960

B. Example of the second method:
Food: P840
Beverage: P160
12% VAT: P90
Service charge: P70
Total: P1,160
Less: 20% discount: P232
Total check: P928

The second method "B" is the correct computation. It also gives the senior citizen a higher discount. Again, there should be no difference in cost if we pay by cash or credit card. For any complaints, call 751-33-30.

Thank you, Secretary Favila, for your concern and assistance.

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Comelec discriminating against gays, lesbians

THE DISMISSAL OF ANG LADLAD'S PETITION for party-list accreditation and the declaration classifying Danton Remoto as a nuisance candidate for the Senate give human rights advocates, local and international, more reasons to keep their eyes wide open.

We seem to have in the Commission on Elections a chair (and commissioners, too) who discriminates against lesbians and gays. After the announcement of Ang Ladlad's and Remoto's disqualification, Abalos said that gays, lesbians and drunkards cannot sit in Congress. But why lump gays and lesbians with drunkards, in the first place?

We have countless members of society who are gay and yet very competent in their respective fields of endeavor. They can make a difference in our country. Perhaps, more than the incumbent and some wannabes (a number of whom are undeniably into heavy drinking and drugs and "everything" else) can. Why would Abalos now dare say they are not fit to serve the people as legislators?

Why is the Comelec afraid of gay legislators? Sexual preference has nothing to do with one's leadership abilities or one's desire to serve his/her nation.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

There seems to be a new strain of "racism" developing in the Comelec. It is apparently discriminating against a group of individuals who has a right to be represented in Congress, just as any other sector, and whose members have the ability to serve the country well. Yet they are regarded as an annoyance simply because they are sexually nonconformist.

Shame, shame, shame. The Comelec should not ruin the country's chances of progress with its dishonorable axe (and acts) of discrimination.

—VENUS CRUZ,
59 Mahabagin St.,
Teachers' Village, Quezon City

Perplexed and perplexing observations

FROM THE VERY START OF THE CAMPAIGN, Team Unity-Team GMA's strategy has been to make the forthcoming midterm elections a proxy war between President Joseph Estrada and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The lapdogs of the administration were released and immediately undertook all manner of black propaganda against the Estrada family. President Erap was, and perhaps will always be, the most convenient scapegoat for the administration's numerous failures.

The reason President Erap dissuaded Sen. Loi Estrada and yours truly from running for the Senate was to debunk claims that this battle is between him and GMA, even if victory for both of us was nearly a foregone conclusion.

No matter how hard the mainstream TV networks and the major dailies try to harp on the angle that the Genuine Opposition (GO) is disorganized and faltering, our candidates' actual encounters with the public during our motorcades and sorties say otherwise. I have been candid in admitting that we are hampered by funding problems, something the administration candidates do not have to contend with. Our candidates have been doing their own fund-raising as well, which is why we give them ample time to do so on their own.

I am merely perplexed as to why our sorties, where our candidates are so warmly welcomed by the people, have not been featured in your paper and in Amando Doronila's regular column. Is there a reason for this?

Nevertheless, I remain confident of GO's imminent victory, with the latest survey showing a probable 9-3 tally in our favor. The people's response renews our commitment to campaign even harder. We believe they look upon us as their ally. Thus, however dilapidated the jeepney our candidates are riding in, this is the same vehicle the masses will push to ultimate victory.

—JV EJERCITO,
interim campaign manager,
Genuine Opposition (GO),
409 Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City

We are likewise perplexed why you should be perplexed about a lack of GO stories when we've featured you as often as GO is newsworthy.—Ed.

Baja denies going to cardinal for extension

IN REFERENCE TO RAMON FAROLAN'S column dated Feb. 26, allow me to correct his allegations:

First, I did not write a letter to or seek His Eminence Cardinal Rosales to request a short extension of my term of duty.

Second, I requested the President and the foreign secretary for a short extension of my term of duty not because of the "perks and privileges of an assignment abroad" but for considerations of national interest. I was elected unanimously as vice president of the United Nation's Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc) by my peers who expected me to fulfill my duties. I am grateful to them for giving me all the opportunity to substantially fulfill my mandate in the short time allowed by the Department of Foreign Affairs. I have thus requested the UN and the Asian Group to consider the possibility that the Philippines may continue to be part of the bureau of this prestigious UN body despite the end of my term of duty.

Third, I have no doubt that I left the "stage while the audience is still applauding." What is most satisfying to me is that the loudest cheers for my achievements came from my peers.

Thus, I believe I hold the high moral ground in this unfortunate saga and have set the stage for continued success of the Philippines in multilateral diplomacy with the "audience still applauding." After this letter, I will no longer engage in rejoinders because I do not believe our mind-sets will achieve any constructive conclusions.

—LAURO L. BAJA JR.

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ERC tolerating unlawful charges vs consumers?

ON AUG. 30, 2006, MERALCO DISCONNECTed our electric service because of our failure to pay a bill deposit pursuant to Article 28 of the Magna Carta for Residential Electricity Consumers, which was promulgated on June 17, 2004; and Sec. 22 of the Energy Regulatory Board's Resolution No. 95-21 dated Aug. 3, 1995 both of which state: "A bill deposit from all residential anti non-residential customers to guarantee payment of bills shall be required of new and/or additional service."

Getting nowhere in my repeated plea for reconnection, I sought the help of the Energy Regulatory Commission (formerly the Energy Regulatory Board) reiterating that our electric service is not new (having been activated on Jan. 7, 1984) and that no additional service was requested/provided ever since.

The ERC, in its letter of Dec. 5, 2006, reminded Meralco that the Magna Carta for Residential Electricity Consumers and ERB Resolution No. 95-21 were already repealed by the Distribution Service and Open Access Rules (DSOAR). "At any rate, we would like to be clarified why you are still imposing a meter deposit," the ERC asked Meralco.

It appears that failing to receive Meralco's response, the ERC did not pursue the matter anymore, thus leaving us without electric connection until now. Unavoidably, it makes me think that the ERC may also be one of the government's regulating bodies "captured by big business." (INQUIRER, 2/24/07) I also think that it is likely that many electric consumers were already disadvantaged by this Meralco imposition which could very well be unlawful.

—TEODORO R. MIGUEL JR.,
Regency Townhomes, 2N Reyes St.,
Xavierville Subdivision II,
Loyola Heights, Quezon City

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PNP watching 7 Cagayan towns

TUGUEGARAO CITY—POLICE ARE MONITORing political developments in seven towns in Cagayan in the run-up to the May 14 elections due to past incidents of poll-related violence.

The towns of Allacapan, Lasam, Buguey, Gattaran, Iguig, Santa Ana and Enrile are in the watch list, Cagayan police director Senior Supt. Pedro Danguilan said.

He said Allacapan was included because of the murder of Mayor Nathaniel Onia in the town in September last year.

He said there were assassination attempts on local officials in Lasam and Gattaran while intense political rivalries had been noted in Enrile and Buguey.

Election-related violent incidents were reported in Iguig and Santa Ana in previous years, he said.

He said police were also checking reports that New People's Army rebels were collecting permit-to-campaign fees from prospective candidates.

Some politicians were asking for police escorts to protect them from communist rebels when they campaign in rebel-controlled areas, he said.

The Commission on Elections will decide on the requests, he said.

Danguilan said reports on the existence of a private armed group in Rizal town were also being checked, after a group of armed men in Laguna was linked to an official there.

He said at least 20 firearms were confiscated from police checkpoints set up in the province during the election period.

Abra

In Bangued, Abra, Gov. Vicente Valera said he did not want the the police's Task Force Abra to be abolished but wanted its members and other policemen, who are favoring local politicians, replaced and removed from the province.

Valera said he appealed to the Comelec to consider replacing these policemen for their alleged failure to dismantle private armed groups maintained by local politicians.

"I did not ask for its (Task Force Abra) abolition, but for the replacement of police officers who are favoring other politicians," Valera told reporters here on Friday.

He said the task force commander, Chief Supt. Eugene Martin, and his men were not doing their job when they failed to identify and dismantle armed groups of Abra politicians.

Valera cited the case of Lagayan Mayor Cecilia Luna, whom, he said, maintains a private army supposedly to protect her from attempts to kill her and members of her family.

"We always wanted to know the identities of these private armed groups. Why don't we, or they, identify who these people are so that the public will know? They should be identified," he said.

Luna, however, denied the governor's claim.

"It is not true. I do not [maintain an] armed group but my relatives are the ones protecting me," Luna told the INQUIRER. *Estanislao Caldez and Hanna Lacsamana, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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Oil retrieval from Solar I tanker in Guimaras starts

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—SALVAGE OPERations to retrieve over a million liters of Petron oil from the MT Solar I, which sank off Guimaras seven months ago, began yesterday.

Environment officials boarded the international salvage vessel Allied Shield to ensure crew compliance with environment precautions required by the Philippine government.

The Allied Shield, owned by an Italian firm specializing in deepwater operations, docked at the Bacolod Real Estate Development Corp. (Bredco) port here Saturday night and sailed toward the site yesterday morning.

The Philippine Coast Guard will bar vessels from entering the one-kilometer radius around the area to avoid work disruption.

Lormelyn Claudio, environment director for Western Visayas, said the Allied Shield was required to submit an environment compliance certificate.

The ECC, among others, required the vessel to outline its mitigating measures should the retrieval operations cause some oil to leak into the sea, said Bienvenido Lipayon, Environment Management Bureau regional director.

Mark Phibbs, who heads the Sonsub Remotely Operated Vessels special projects, said it would take two to three days to survey the site after which drilling operations on the tanks of the submerged Solar I to remove the oil would start.

"We do not know how much oil is still on board the Solar I. The length of the recovery work will really depend on that," he said.

The Solar I was carrying 13,000 barrels or over 2 million liters of bunker fuel in the vessel's 10 tanks when it sank 15 nautical miles southwest of Guimaras Island, at a depth of 2,100 meters, on Aug. 11 last year. The 998-gross-ton tanker owned by Sunshine Maritime Development Corp. was under contract of giant oil firm Petron to ship fuel to Western Mindanao Power Corp. in Zamboanga del Sur.

An estimated quarter of a million liters of the tanker's content was spilled as a result of the incident, affecting the coastal waters of Guimaras and part of Iloilo, making it the worst oil spill to hit the country in recent years.

Sonsub was contracted by the Protection and Indemnity Club, insurer of Sunshine Maritime.

P10 million per day

The retrieval operation, estimated to cost $6 million or about P10 million per day, is expected to last 20 to 25 days, according to Joe Nichols, International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund deputy director.

This is only the second time in history that such a deep-sea oil retrieval operation will be undertaken, Phibbs said.

Sonsub retrieved 13,500 tons of crude oil without spillage from the tanker Prestige, which sank in 10,000 feet of water 240 kilometers from the coast of Spain, he said.

Sonsub will use the latest technology, including the 80-meter dynamic positioning vessel Allied Shield and two ROVs to work on the sunken vessel, he added.

The ROVs will drill two holes in each of the 10 sunken oil tanks containing oil.

Water will be allowed to flow into one hole to displace any remaining oil, which will flow from the second hole. A shuttle container will be used to capture the oil to be transferred on to the Allied Shield, he said.

The crew will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week to hasten the recovery.

Leak prevention

Lipayon said Allied Shield had given assurance that oil booms and skimmers would be put in place to prevent any spread of oil that might leak during the retrieval.

The Philippine Coast Guard also has a second defense of oil booms while a third defense, made up of indigenous spill booms, has also been set up by Guimaras barangays, he said.

Livino Duran, provincial environment and natural resources officer, said the DENR had formed four teams to monitor the operation.

One team will be based at Bredco port, where the recovered oil will be off-loaded, to monitor the volume of recovered fuel, take samples and ensure safety precautions in its transfer to its final destination.

Phibbs said Sonsub had a contingency plan to address possible risks and ensure a fail-safe operation. Among these are oil spill response tugboats that will be deployed during the retrieval operations.

CHILDREN of Barangay Tando, Nueva Valencia, Guimaras help their parents catch fish in Guimaras Strait. It takes six hours for fishermen to catch a kilo of fish and they sometimes go home empty-handed after the oil spill last year.
ARNOLD ALMACEN/ INQUIRER VISAYAS

Baguio honors 10 outstanding women

BAGUIO CITY—WHEN THE city government honored 10 outstanding women leaders here on International Women's Day on Thursday, they used the occasion to call for a politics of change.

In a rare display of support, some 1,000 women from the government and left-leaning groups marched together to campaign for candidates who espoused women's concerns and issues.

Vernie Yocogan-Diano, acting chair of the Innabuyog-Gabriela and local coordinator of Gabriela Women's party-list group, lauded the government for involving nongovernment organizations in the celebration.

The awardees were Lourdes Dulay (education); Jeanette Ribaya-Cawiding (socio-civic group); Judge Clarita Tabin (legal); Emerita Fuerte (cooperative); Epifania Daoey (business); Corazon Pindog (socio-civic); Onesima Bugnosen (socio-civic); Remedios Cueste (posthumous); Dr. Michaela de Fiesta (medicine); and Dr. Nini Rusgal (public sector).

Councilor Perlita Rondez said in a forum on Wednesday that since the city council approved the Gender and Development Code in 2005, the city had launched programs that promoted gender equality.

She cited the Bantay Bata and Bantay Babae programs that serve as hotlines for reports on abuses and violence, and the Bantay Familia, a support group that provides therapy sessions and counseling for the families of victims of domestic violence.

Erin Tagle, chair of Women Involved in Nation-building, said candidates who are running in the May 14 elections should be commended because "they are willing to help us."

"(The candidates) are willing to be of service to us. Let us claim our right by getting them to serve us. In claiming to do this, we also help them become better leaders," she said. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon*

ROUNDUP

Baguio cops get cars, guns, bikes

BAGUIO CITY—The Cordillera police turned over on Wednesday 75 12-gauge shotguns, a Toyota Altis, a Toyota Hilux and two 750cc-motorcycles to the city police as part of the modernization of the service command. The vehicles, which were used in Cebu for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit, have been distributed to police stations nationwide. Acting Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr. also turned over two brand new Mitsubishi Adventure vans to the police.

Elmer Kristian Dauigoy, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Transco probes missing bolts

MALAYBALAY CITY—The National Transmission Corp. (Transco) in Maramag, Bukidnon has started investigating the loss of iron bolts holding a steel tower on Wednesday night. The incident caused the tower to fall and render the city and Valencia without power for nearly 12 hours. Transco spokesperson Rufino Magbanua said the perpetrators also cut the steel tower's buntings. The outage occurred while Bukidnon was celebrating its founding anniversary, for which Magbanua sent an apology to the provincial government.

Grace Albasin, Inquirer Mindanao

3 soldiers hurt in 2 Compostela clashes

DAVAO CITY—Three soldiers, including a junior officer, were wounded in separate clashes in Compostela Valley on March 4. The first fighting occurred when patrolling soldiers from the Army's 60th and the 72nd Infantry Battalion chanced upon a group of rebels in Barangay Concepcion in Laak town. Lt. Col. Rolando Joselito Bautista, assistant chief of staff of the Army's 10th Infantry Division identified the wounded soldiers as Pfc. Roberto Matildo and Pvt. Hayde Ponce. In the second clash, which occurred in Barangay Banglasan in Montevista town, 2Lt. Abelardo Gabasa, platoon leader of the 28th Infantry Battalion, was wounded, he said.

Joselle Badilla, Inquirer Mindanao

Typhoid fever outbreak in Agusan

LORETO, Agusan del Sur—Local health officials have declared an outbreak of typhoid fever with 48 persons already afflicted as of Wednesday, town hospital chief Dr. Chammie Flores said. He urged local officials to help and residents to practice proper sanitation and to boil water before drinking it. Typhoid fever is caused by the bacterium *Salmonella typhi* and is spread through the consumption of unsafe food and water. The symptoms of the disease include headache, fever, drowsiness, and rose-colored spots on the belly, enlarged spleen, tea-colored urine, delirium and constipation during the early stage. If left untreated, the patient could die from complications.

Chris V. Panganiban, Inquirer Mindanao

Fire guts Batangas market

FIRE gutted the newly renovated Batangas public market in Barangay Poblacion, Batangas City, before dawn Thursday, the start of Fire Prevention Month. Police said damage could be P30 million-P50 million. Witnesses heard an explosion inside the market at around 3 a.m. before the fire engulfed the dry goods, food and native goods sections. The market opened three months ago after undergoing a major repair. Eleven fire trucks from nearby towns helped the lone city fire truck put out the fire at about 5 a.m. Zaide said no one was injured.

Marlon Ramos and Marlon Alexander Luistro, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Family thanks donors

CONTRIBUTIONS to the fund drive for Jerwin Batiles, the boy with two holes in his heart (A18/Feb 5, 2007) has reached P226,220, excluding a pledge coursed through his doctor. Of those who sent money, 42 have wanted to remain anonymous. Jerwin's parents thanked those who responded to their appeal. For those who want to help, please make deposits to Jerwin's new account under his mother's name: Regina Batiles 0336065402 Land Bank of the Philippines, Digos City Branch.

Red Cross housing

THE PHILIPPINE National Red Cross, with funding support from the European Commission for Humanitarian Aid Office (Echo) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), will build 9,000 houses for families rendered homeless by Typhoon "Reming" in Albay, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Marinduque, Oriental Mindoro, Aurora, Quezon and Isabela. Another 6,000 families with damaged houses will receive roofing and shelter materials. A model house being built in Barangay Maugon, Albay, is shown in photo.

Mayor going up against Dato for House seat

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

SAN FERNANDO, CAMARINES Sur—The mayor of a small-town has shattered expectations here that Diosdado Ignacio "Dato" Arroyo, younger son of President Macapagal-Arroyo, would run unopposed for congressman in Camarines Sur's first district.

Former congressman and now Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya earlier called off a plan to field his wife Marisa in the congressional contest.

Mayor Sabas "Abang" Mabulo, 47, won the 2004 mayoral race unopposed but could not take it that no one in the first district has stood up to offer an "option" to Arroyo's candidacy.

MAYOR Sabas Mabulo (right) has started receiving campaign support from townmates since he announced his decision to run against Diosdado Ignacio "Dato" Arroyo for seat in Congress representing the first district of Camarines Sur. JUAN ESCANDOR JR.

Option

"I believe that we have to offer an option if we want to prove that democracy works by changing politics, by defying the wishes of entrenched politicians," Mabulo said.

Mabulo, a former worker of the nongovernment organization Pag-Bicol, acknowledged that he was facing a formidable political machinery and resources of Arroyo, who has the support of Andaya, Rep. Luis R. Villafuerte, Gov. Luis Raymund "LRay" Villafuerte and nine mayors of the first district of Camarines Sur.

"I want to try to win, recognizing the limitations of having no massive political machinery, power and resources and mainly relying on a network of church-based organizations, nongovernment organizations, and the civil society that include the Metro Naga business group," he said.

If he could not mobilize volunteers to his side, he would lose, he said.

Mabulo said the decision to run against Arroyo came after a "deep discernment" because of the outcome of breaking ties with his political allies.

What made him decide to play the role of David against a Goliath in terms of politics was the pledge of a church-based Catholic organization called the Christian Life Community of the Philippines, a nationwide organization, which he said, was present in all parishes.

Integration

Mabulo said he did not have goodies to share but he would rely on integration with the communities and press the hands of as many people as possible while explaining his purpose in running.

He has been in local politics for 11 years now since he was first elected as councilor of the 22-village town with 14,251 voters.

After serving his first term in the town council, he ran and won the mayoral race with only a margin of 172 votes in the 1995 elections. In 2001, this margin improved to 254 votes.

But Mabulo, son of a former town vice mayor, is the first mayor here to run unopposed in the 2004 elections. He got 72 percent of the total 10,930 votes cast.

San Fernando is 30 kilometers, via the national road, from Libmanan, the town where Arroyo established residency in the village of Potot.

Libmanan is the biggest town in Camarines Sur with 75 villages and 41,734 voters of the 189,822 voters of the first district.

Mabulo won in all the elections he joined even though he had no permanent political party. He claimed he had not spent more than P50,000 in mayoral contests.

Allies

He allies himself with local politicians who believe in the same principle of transparency that he espouses, Mabulo said.

When he decided to take on the challenge of running against the official candidate of the local administration coalition, Mabulo in effect burns political bridges with his former political allies, including Andaya, the political kingpin in Camarines Sur's first district.

This also means going against the solid endorsement of the rest of the nine mayors here who favor the candidacy of Arroyo.

More so, the decision of this mayor to run against Arroyo is on a collision course with the combined political machinery of the Andayas and the Villafuertes, the dominant political clans in the province.

'Default' option

Asked if he conformed late last year with the endorsement of Arroyo by Andaya when it was presented to the 10 mayors of the first district, Mabulo said he did not say a word and did not welcome the development.

Mabulo said if Andaya's wife Marisa pursued her plan to run he could have supported her candidacy all the way. He said it had been his "default" option before Arroyo's candidacy was announced.

He said that the "default" option was "to defend the gains of the Andayas in the first district."

Ironically, his original plan was to take a leave from politics when his third term as mayor would end this year and then go back to teaching or work in an NGO.

"It's a long shot and it has never been a part of my dream to go beyond being a mayor of this town," Mabulo said.

Andaya and Mabulo were together in the Liberal Party, Atienza Wing, until the latter was sworn in by Sen. Franklin Drilon last week as standard-bearer in the congressional race against Arroyo.

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'Bantay-Bugaw' in Olongapo, Bontoc to protect women, kids

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—OLONGAPO CITY in Zambales and Bontoc in Mt. Province are the new sites of a community-based quick response program aimed at punishing recruiters preying on girls and women for sexual and labor exploitation.

The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women-Asia Pacific (CATW-AP) is replicating the Bantay-Bugaw (Traffickers Watch) project in those areas starting March 14.

This came after the same project proved successful in Calbayog City in Western Samar, Zamboanga City and Quezon City since 2004, CATW-AP executive director Jean Enriquez said in a telephone interview on Saturday.

Enriquez said the international coalition, which has maintained a consultative status under the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 1989, has undertaken the project to implement the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 (Republic Act No. 9208) down to the communities.

She said the project engages local governments, barangay councils, the Philippine National Police, government agencies like the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Department of Justice, and nongovernment organizations.

The larger challenge, Enriquez said, was helping law enforcers and prosecutors focus on traffickers than on victims.

"Much of the time, it is the victim who gets arrested and prosecuted, not the exploiter. We are trying to see a shift," she said.

The law imposes a penalty of life imprisonment on traffickers.

Traffickers are not total strangers in communities as they are either residents or have relatives there, Enriquez said.

Blood relations are cited as a reason for the hesitance to report or not cases of trafficking, she said.

In the 13 pilot villages that were mostly urban, CATW-AP saw significant increases in the number of reported cases.

In Barangay Carmen in Calbayog, for instance, the 40 cases reported in 2004 shot up to 90 by the end of 2006.

Enriquez said the system works in the villages by informing residents about how traffickers work and by encouraging them to report suspects to the barangay council.

The council, on the other hand, demands documents of job orders or contracts, logs these and verifies their authenticity with appropriate agencies.

Verified information on fake recruiters helps prevent trafficking, Enriquez said.

The police also step in to arrest suspects or rescue victims. The matter also proceeds at the level of the prosecutors.

The project will be implemented in Olongapo City because many girls and women from Samar and other provinces are brought in local bars there for prostitution.

It has reached out to Bontoc, the capital town of Mt. Province, to stop the trafficking of indigenous women for prostitution and domestic servitude. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

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Canada-based NGO to bring 'Tagaytay 5' case to int'l courts

A CANADA-BASED INTERNATIONAL NON-government organization will elevate the case of five farmers accused of being communist guerrillas to the international courts if justice is not served to them as soon as possible, an official of the group said.

Ira Zbarsky, project coordinator of the Shuswap Association for the Promotion of Ecological Development (Saped), said he hoped he could testify for Riel Custodio, Axel Pinpin, Aris Sarmiento, Rico Ybañez and Michael Masayes.

"If justice is not served in the Philippines, we will pursue the matter in international courts. We cannot allow this to go on; our partners and our organization's reputation were already affected," Zbarsky told the INQUIRER.

He said the 10 months of detention of the farmers in Camp Vicente Lim without trial and evidence was a "clear proof" of delay in the justice system in the Philippines.

Zbarsky came to the Philippines to visit project areas of Saped in the first week of February. For four years, Saped has been working with the farmers' group Kalipunan ng mga Magsasaka sa Kabite (Kamagsasaka-Ka or Farmers Federation in Cavite) as its partner-organization in coffee and muscovado sugar trade and in developing cooperatives in rural communities in Cavite.

According to their supporters, Custodio, Pinpin and Sarmiento are members of Kamagsasaka while Rico Ybañez and Michael Masayes were hired as drivers.

Zbarsky said his group also planned legal action on the "disappeared funds" that police allegedly seized from the detainees.

The money was supposedly payment for coffee bought from the farmers, he said.

He said the farmers' arrest was a serious setback to the organizations' success as the lack of resolution in the case and the missing funds gravely affected the farmers.

"The farmers, especially (Pinpin), are essential in our trade and development projects among the Cavite farmers," he said.

Artists visit

In Camp Vicente Lim in Canlubang, Laguna, a group of artists and writers visited the prisoners on Wednesday, a few hours after the five detainees were informed in a court hearing in Tagaytay City that the judge handling their rebellion case has denied their petition to quash and a separate motion to reinvestigate the charges filed against them.

Headed by award-winning fiction writer Jun Cruz Reyes, representatives of the Amado V. Hernandez Resource Center and the University of the Philippines Institute of Creative Writing (UP-ICW) handed over books and magazines to one of the five detainees, Axel Pinpin.

Pinpin, a poet, was a fellow of the UP-ICW in 1999. He was a researcher and media officer of the Kamagsasaka-Ka when he was arrested on April 28, 2006 by police and Naval intelligence operatives.

Reyes said the "writers' community in the whole world is saddened" by his detention.

Vim Nadera, recipient of the Ten Outstanding Young Men for literature, echoed the call for the release of Pinpin.

Petition junked

Regional Trial Court Judge Edwin Larida denied the petition of the "Tagaytay 5" to junk the rebellion charges against them and another petition for a reinvestigation of the case.

"The allegations advanced in the motion to quash filed by the accused ... are evidenciary in nature that may be properly appreciated in the hearing of the case," Larida said in his order dated Feb. 20, 2007.

Jose Manuel Diokno, counsel of the five accused, assailed the ruling, saying Larida did not give them a chance to present evidence to show that his clients were illegally arrested.

Diokno noted that when they appeared before the court on Feb. 21, they were not informed that Larida had already made a decision on their petition.

"We're really wondering why we're not given a copy of the decision. We're ready to present [pieces of] evidence to show that my clients were illegally arrested then suddenly the judge said he already made a decision," he said in a phone interview.

He said a series of motions would be filed before the court to stop the scheduled arraignment on June 25.

Sarmiento expressed dismay over Larida's order. "It was the commissioner of the (Commission of Human Rights) himself who said that we were abducted and not arrested. We can't understand why Judge Larida did not see that." *Niña Catherine Calleja and Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

WRITERS Jun Cruz Reyes and Vim Nadera visit jailed poet Axel Pinpin and the Tagaytay 5 at Camp Vicente Lim. MARLON RAMOS

'The farmers' arrest was a serious setback to the success of their organizations'

EVIL WILL TRIUMPH IF ALL GOOD MEN WILL DO NOTHING

By Mayor Jessie B. Castillo
Bacoor, Cavite

TO THE CONCERNED CITIZENRY:

This is a plea for all good the concerned citizens to come out and participate in order to make this forthcoming May 14, 2007 elections peaceful, fair and honest.

TO ACHIEVE THIS NOBLE PURPOSE, THERE IS A NEED TO MOBILIZE THE LAY MINISTERS OF ALL THE RELIGIOUS GROUPS, SUCH AS THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, IGLESIA NI CRISTO, PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENT CHURCH (AGLIPAYANS) AND ALL THE PROTESTANTS SECTS AS WELL AS THE CHARISMATIC GROUPS SUCH AS EL SHADDAI AND JESUS IS LORD MOVEMENT AND THE MEMBERS OF ALL SOCIO-CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE ROTARY CLUB, JAYCEES, LIONS, KIWANIS AND OTHER SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS SO THAT THEY WILL ALL COME OUT TO MAKE VIGIL ON THEIR RESPECTIVE CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES MOST ESPECIALLY IN THE DEPRESSED AREAS DURING THE MOST CRITICAL TIMES OF THE ELECTIONS which is the eve thereof up to the post counting and delivery of the ballot boxes from the precincts to the city or municipal halls so that we can reduce if not abate election harassment and vote-buying to the minimum.

TOTOO, NASA DIOS ANG AWA, PERO NASA TAO ANG GAWA.

ADVT

CONSPIRACY? PLEASE INVESTIGATE...

The confluence of various events revealed the existence of a conspiracy to disable Mayor Jessie B. Castillo this May 14, 2007 elections.

First among these events were the numerous death threats his family were receiving, however instead of assistance, all he got were attempts to replace his Chief of Police and the detailing of all PNP personnel that he has previously rejected here in Bacoor or whom he asked for re-assignment to other posts. These came despite his previous warnings that he will not allow the PNP the use of municipally owned facilities, vehicles and equipments unless they complied with the rules and regulations promulgated by the COMELEC relative to the transfer of PNP personnel during election period and to the legal prerogative of a Local Chief Executive of choosing from among the three (3) candidates. Obviously, these were reenactments of the 2001 elections, when in the guise of an Officer-in-Charge the PNP shuffled the entire Bacoor Police two (2) weeks before elections and that there was no more time to protest.

Thus, the padlocking of one of the seven municipally owned PNP Stations last February 7, 2007 and transfer to another site in order that his protest may be heard. The next day, he thought that all the issues were settled and everything will be back to normal as in fact the closed station was re-opened and the vehicles and equipments returned, however, later that day came a Resolution from the NAPOLCOM withdrawing his deputation over the local PNP which in effect make Mayor Jessie B. Castillo inutile over the police including their assignments in the municipality. It is indeed ironic as the PNP continue to use the municipally owned buildings, vehicles, motorcycles he had provided, what is worse is that even electricity charges are all chargeable to the discretionary fund of the Mayor.

The second incident came after the closure of the police station, last February 13, 2007 the provincial PNP issued a directive to all his PNP security to distance themselves from him instead of closing in on him as there are threats to his life.

Third, last February 27, 2007, there was an alleged shootout which resulted to the death of four (4) suspects and gathered from their belongings were sketches of his house and that of his civilian security together with the plate numbers of his vehicles. What is even worse was the cellular phone of one of the suspect revealed that prior to his demise he was in contact at least four (4) times with a known mayoralty candidate from Bacoor and two of the suspects bear the same surname of that candidate. All of this information was passed to the mayor by members of the press during their interviews with him and which was broadcasted in the news. However, last March 1, 2007, exasperated with the delay in giving him official reports of the said incident he requested the PNP Regional and Provincial command to furnish him a copy of their report together with the sketches and cellular phone numbers as reported, heard and seen on TV. But to his dismay, he was informed that there were no such things as the sketches and cellular phone but instead the plate numbers of another candidate. WHEW, ONLY IN THE PHILIPPINES.

Fourth, in the afternoon of March 1, 2007, instead of getting a report of the said incident, he received information that the PNP Provincial Command had filed various cases against him resulting from the February 7, 2007 incident. The cases range from the crime of sedition to grave abuse of authority.

What followed are howls of foul play from the families of the four dead suspects as the suspect victims are legitimate businessmen/employees. **Last March 5, 2007, ABS-CBN news showed a flashback of the February 27, 2007 incident where the van used by the suspects have been seen to have a plate number CONTRARY TO THE OFFICIAL DECLARATION of the Cavite PNP command that these suspects were riding a van with no plate number.**

WHAT'S ALL OF THESE, a movie script, a shootout or a rubout or may even be an election frame up. HELP PLEASE INVESTIGATE.

UP TO NOW HE HAS YET TO RECEIVE AN OFFICIAL REPORT ON THE SHOOTOUT FROM THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE AS REQUESTED.

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SANCTION VS POLL FRAUD

'Wrath of Allah' implored on bribe giving, taking

By Ryan Rosauro
Inquirer Mindanao

MARAWI CITY—MUSLIM activists in Lanao del Sur turned to religion for "spiritual sanction" in an effort to end fraudulent electoral practices.

In a prayer rally here on Thursday, about 1,000 people, mostly youths, echoed the message amid the brisk pre-campaign activities by prospective candidates, three weeks ahead of the official start of campaigning for local positions.

Stickers, streamers and posters have already been posted, although no desired elective positions are indicated.

Hadji Abdullah Dalidig, chair of the Islamic Movement for Electoral Reform and Good Governance (IMERGG), said early indicators pointed to "large-scale fraud" by competing political camps in the province in the May 14 elections.

"This is always a sad reality here (in Lanao del Sur)—massive fraud has become a permanent fixture of every electoral exercise," Dalidig told the INQUIRER.

As a countervailing action, he said, "we will seek to Islamize the political contest by imploring the wrath of Allah for those who give bribe" to voters.

Dalidig explained that it was not only the "bribe giver" that is at fault because "in the vote-buying process, there is also the willing recipient."

"The wrath of Allah is also implored for those willing recipients," he added.

To always remind voters and politicians alike of the message, [the] IMERGG posted a large banner made of plywood at the public square bearing the exact Arabic text from the Koran on the sayings of Prophet Mohammad about bribes.

Its loose English translation reads: "The wrath of Allah to those who give bribes; the wrath of Allah to those who take bribes; the wrath of Allah to those who facilitates bribery."

Dalidig said politicians were given notice about the prayer rally but there was no invitation for any of them to speak.

"If they came, we would have been glad so that they can hear our call and reflect upon the Koranic verse also," he said.

The Army's 51st Infantry Battalion sent a platoon of troops to the rally.

Lawyer Dimapuno Dato Ramos, former vice governor of Lanao del Sur and now IMERGG secretary general, urged the youth to be "mujahideens for a clean election."

Speaking in Maranao, Ramos told the young people that politicians "who win by money takes away money from the government when they are already in office."

Addressing her message to parents, Dr. Helen Acoon, president of the Ninoy Aquino Memorial College and respected civic leader, beamed: "You are corrupting your children by selling your votes."

She said the quality of government the Maranao are getting reflects badly on their character.

An IMERGG volunteer revealed to the INQUIRER that politicians had been monitored to be already going around "as if they are canvassing" political supporters. This comes with a dangling "price offer."

Apart from igniting tensions and often violence among rival political camps, local elections in Lanao del Sur have been notorious for fraud and irregularities.

During the 2004 general elections, the province was dubbed the main theater of electoral rigging, especially in the presidential contest.

Admitting to the "monumental challenge" facing advocates of clean elections in Lanao del Sur, Dalidig said one "emerging hope" is the enlistment of Moro youths in the effort.

For a long time, the youth has been "watching on the sidelines as all these things happen," hence seeing them taking an active role in ensuring credible polls "is simply encouraging," he said.

Dalidig disclosed that the Lanao del Sur chapter of the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) is already "in good terms" with the national leadership.

Dalidig and Namfrel chair Jose Concepcion had been at odds since 2004 over differences in assessment of the presidential vote in Lanao del Sur.

Dalidig said both of them made amends "in the spirit of continuing the struggle for honest, orderly and peaceful elections" and through the efforts of businessman Guillermo Luz, who is also a Namfrel official.

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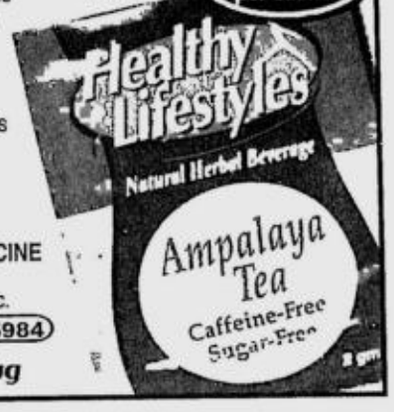

MUSLIM activists speak to young voters against the backdrop of a Koranic text imploring the wrath of Allah for bribe givers, takers and facilitators. RYAN ROSAURO

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11 cops probed for accepting bribes

DAVAO CITY—SOUTHERN MINDANAO POlice director Chief Supt. Andres Caro ordered the grounding of at least 11 policemen caught in videotape while accepting bribes from motorists.

The videotape was shown over a television program here last week.

But Caro ruled out any outright dismissal pending investigation of the policemen.

He did not identify the policemen but said eight were with the city police. The three others were under the Davao del Norte police command.

All suspects are under camp restriction while an investigation is underway, he said.

"We will not tolerate these acts and misbehaviors. We are not afraid to dismiss you because there are a lot of applicants out there wishing to be of service," Caro said.

Caro said that if policemen could not behave, they should resign from the service.

"The police are supposed to show good example to the people. [Policemen] are not supposed to do illegal acts. If they cannot draw the line, then they do not have a place in the police force," he said.

Caro said the alleged involvement of a police official in the bribery scandal was also being looked into.

"We would like to know whether or not the reports that somebody holding an office is behind them are true," Caro said.

Senior Supt. Jaime Morente, city police chief, said that while accepting bribes was illegal, those who gave money to police officers in exchange for favors were also liable.

"We appeal to the motorists and truck drivers to stop giving bribes. Especially for those who are carrying cargo, we will be conducting arrests," Morente said. *Jeffrey M. Tupas, Mindanao Bureau*

Jail warden asks for hike in food budget after deaths of 3 inmates

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE SAMAR PROVINCIAL jail warden has asked Gov. Milagrosa Tan to increase the food budget for jails there following the recent deaths of three inmates, allegedly due to hunger.

PO3 Dominico Bitanzor said the P2.4-million annual budget allocated by the province to his office was "simply too low."

The province has three jails—in Catbalogan, Basay and Calbiga towns—with over 400 inmates.

"Actually, we have asked Governor Tan to increase the budget, for the food subsistence of the prisoners under our custody, several times. But for some reason, the governor has ignored us," Bitanzor, who has been in his post since Sept. 11, 2005 in an acting capacity," told the INQUIRER over the phone.

The situation worsened when Tan did not release the food allocation for February, contributing to hunger among the inmates. The release of funds is done on a monthly basis, Bitanzor said.

"They depended on food brought by their respective families and the benevolence of the other groups, including the Church, for them to have a meal," Bitanzor said.

The provincial government had released around P300,000 for the inmates' meals in January, he said.

Suffering from hunger, the prisoners staged a strike a week ago and demanded the release of the budget meant for food subsidy. On Friday, the governor, through provincial budget officer Max Sison, released about P500,000 for the inmates' food.

However, three inmates had died due to diseases that were "aggravated by their hunger," Bitanzor said.

The warden could only identify the fatality from the Catbalogan jail as Claro Dumael, 56, who died Feb. 28 inside his cell. Bitanzor said Dumael died of heart attack.

The other fatalities were from Basey and Calbiga. One died on Feb. 6 while the other died a day later, he added.

He could not say what caused the deaths of the two inmates.

The jail in Catbalogan has 237 inmates while the remaining 227 prisoners were in the sub-provincial jails in Basey and Calbiga towns.

Tan could not be reached by the INQUIRER by phone and she did not reply to the text messages sent her asking her to comment on the issue.

The provincial officials also refused to issue any statement.

Every woman has the right to know the evidence:

8 health risks for women who do not breastfeed

Women who do not breastfeed exclusively commonly use infant formulas. This list gives some examples from hundreds of scientific research studies that show the importance of breastfeeding and the dangers of unnecessary or improper formula feeding.

1 Increased risk of breast cancer

Breastfeeding decreases the risk of breast cancer in mothers. The innate immune system in breastmilk is complex and likely provides protection for maternal breast tissue and the digestive tract of newborns.
Armogida et al. Allergy and Asthma, 2004

Breast cancer rates in premenopausal women were approximately 12 per cent lower among women who had been breastfed as infants.
Martin R et al, Journal of the National Cancer Institute, 2005

2 Increased risk of being overweight

Each month of breastfeeding brought an average reduction of 0.44 kg in weight. Therefore, longer breastfeeding can contribute to a reduction in weight retention after birth.
Kac G Et al, American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 2004

3 Increased risk of ovarian cancer and endometrial cancer

Not breastfeeding has been associated with increased risk of ovarian cancer. Women who breastfed longer and breastfed more children had lower risk of ovarian cancer.
Chiaffarino F etal, Gynecological Oncology, 2005

Women who have given birth but who had never breastfed had greater risk of endometrial cancer than those who had breastfed.
Okamura C etal, Journal of Experimental Medicine, 2006

4 Increased risk of osteoporosis

Women with many children and long total period of breastfeeding have similar or higher bone mineral density and similar or lower fracture risk than their peers who have not given birth and breastfed.
Karlsson MK etal, Acta Orthopaedica, 2005

5 Reduced natural child spacing

Mothers who were exclusively breastfeeding had a longer period of no menstruation by six months after childbirth, than those who were not. None of the breastfeeding mothers became pregnant six months postpartum.
Egbuonu I etal, Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, 2005

6 Increased risk of rheumatoid arthritis

Breastfeeding for more than 12 months reduced women's risk of rheumatoid arthritis. The shorter the length of breastfeeding, the higher the women's risk of rheumatoid arthritis.
Karlson E W et al, Arthritis & Rheumatism, 2004

7 Increased stress and anxiety

Formula feeding mothers had less positive moods, reported fewer positive events, and perceived more stress than breastfeeders. Formula feeders also had more depression and anger than breastfeeding mothers.
Groer M W, Biological Research for Nursing, 2005

8 Increased risk of developing diabetes

Each year of breastfeeding reduced the mother's risk of diabetes by 15 per cent. Thus, the shorter the breastfeeding, the higher the incidence of diabetes.
Stuebe AM et al, Journal of the American Medical Association, 2005

The World Health Organization and UNICEF recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of baby's life. Afterwards, local, nutritious foods should be introduced, while breastfeeding continues up to two years or beyond.

gatas ni nanay walang kapantay!

INFACT Canada Infant Feeding Action Coalition
World Health Organization
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Fire razes Comelec building

From page A1

library and the Commission on Audit.

More than 300 employees remained at the old building after some of the offices were transferred to the Palacio, including those of Abalos and the Comelec's five commissioners, the law department, the commission secretary and the Electoral Contest Adjudication Department (Ecad), among others.

The Comelec annex building, located behind the old building, was spared, saving the central voters' list, employees said. But Wynne Asdala, a director at the Comelec law department, told reporters that some records of the allocation of voters' precincts were lost in the fire, causing some concern.

However, Asdala said the information might have been stored in a back-up file and they could still be retrieved from Comelec field officers.

Abalos said that today the commission would check to see if there were ballot boxes burned in the fire that were "related to election protests."

Election records burned

Commissioner Rene Sarmiento said that as far as he knew, most of the ballot boxes—about a hundred—that were subjects of protests contained returns that had been seen by the commissioners and that these cases were up "for resolution."

Commissioner Florentino Tuason said that losing the records of the past elections—such as the 1995, 1998, 2001 and 2004 polls—would not hamper the preparations for the May elections. But, Tuason said, the figures had been lost and these may be needed for future reference.

Also burned were applications for exemptions from the gun ban, and personal belongings of employees.

District fire chief Pablo Cordeta said in a radio interview he was not ruling out sabotage. "We don't discount the possibility."

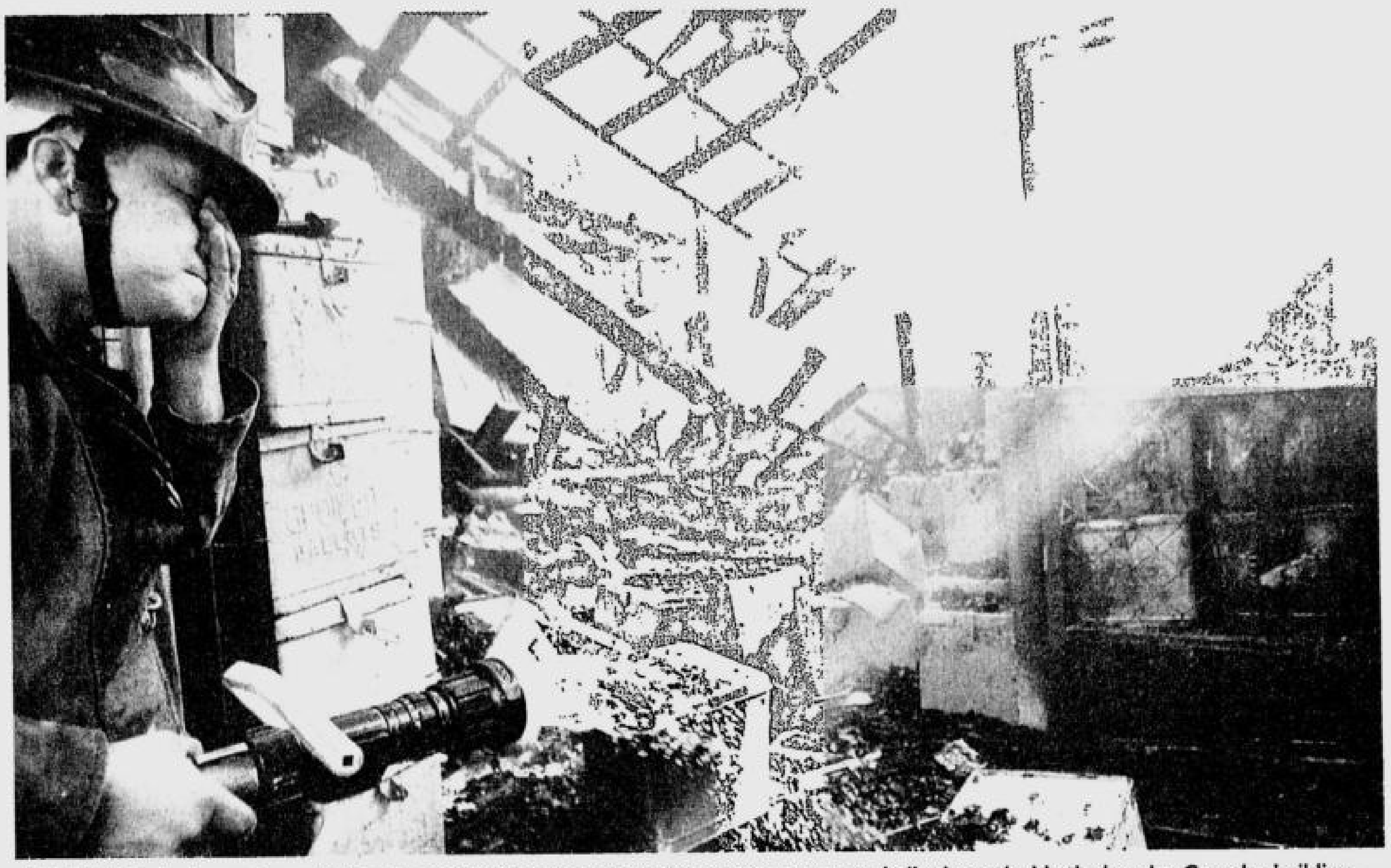
Firefighters from the Intramuros station, just a block away, said they did not get an immediate report of the blaze. The station responded at 12:51 a.m., about six minutes after the fire broke out. It was put out at 5:30 a.m.

Report came late

Insp. David Saob, substation commander of the Intramuros fire station, said the fire was already out of control when firemen arrived at the scene.

"It was reported late to us," he said in Filipino. "In our area, fires don't usually become that big."

Arson investigator SFO2 Wilson Tana said the cause of the fire was under investigation. It reportedly originated at the General Services Division (GSD) on the ground floor of the building's Arzobispo Street side.



A FIREMAN splashes water on his face to avoid suffocating as he trains a water cannon on ballot boxes inside the burning Comelec building.
EDWIN BACASMAS

Tana said probers were looking into faulty electrical wiring, but they had not ruled out the possibility of arson.

Damage was estimated at P20 million, which included newly purchased computers and four vehicles. No injuries were reported.

Saob said the flames on the Arzobispo side were "not visible" although only the Palacio del Gobernador building stood between the Comelec and the fire station.

"If the fire wasn't that big when we arrived, we would have been able to put it out," he said, adding that their two ladder trucks immediately arrived at the scene.

Building of light materials

Saob said the decades-old building was made of mostly wooden or "light materials" that made it more vulnerable. Only the concrete walls of the burned building remained standing; the roof and the second floor had collapsed.

Manila's 15 firetrucks responded to the call for help, along with 30 trucks from the Filipino-Chinese fire volunteer associations.

PO2 Ronaldo Asis of the Philippine National Police-Special Action Force reported the fire to the Intramuros station at 12:51 a.m. PNP-SAF personnel were deployed to secure the building perimeter around the clock.

Comelec security officer Emmanuel Lanuza, who was inside the security office at the time of the incident, said a diesel-fueled generator located in the GSD may have added "fuel to the fire."

"There was newly delivered kraft paper in the storage area near there. It was supposed to be used as cover for ballots and election returns," he said, adding that the motorpool area where cars were repaired may have also contributed to the conflagration.

No explosion heard

Lanuza said he did not hear any explosion and only saw a budding fire. He said there were seven of them from the Organic Security agency on duty at the time, but no one had noticed anything unusual prior to the incident.

He said there should have been at least four personnel from the PNP-SAF on security duty outside. Lanuza said there were also stay-in Comelec employees, who were invited for questioning today along with the PNP-SAF staff.

Opposition senatorial candidates said the fire was cause for concern, but Abalos said that only those with "evil minds" would think that the fire was designed to rig or hamper the elections. "I hope God forgives them for having those thoughts," Abalos said.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel said, "The burning of the Comelec office raises alarms that vital evidence might have been burned. Chairman Abalos' good intentions need to be proven."

Pimentel said that Abalos should order a full inventory of the documents and equipment destroyed, specifically of vital evidence such as those involving the failed P1.3-billion poll modernization project, the procurement of supplies for the 2007 elections and the cheating allegations in the 2004 presidential election.

Fire 'bodes ill'

Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, campaign manager of the Genuine Opposition, said that the unusual timing of the fire, a few days after a Social Weather Stations survey confirmed the commanding lead of opposition candidates, "bodes ill."

"The fire which destroyed vital poll protest evidence would get Garci (former Comelec Commission Virgilio Garcillano) off the hook and create clones of Garci in the elections, like a phoenix rising from the ashes," said Osmeña in a phone interview.

GO senatorial candidate Panfilo Lacson appealed for calm. "It would be better for everybody, opposition and administration, to be sober and patiently wait for a fair and sensible investigation," he said.

Rep. Prospero Pichay said he expected Team Unity to be blamed for the fire. "We know how irresponsible the opposition is. That's their pattern. Even without evidence, they will immediately accuse us of cheating this early," Pichay said. *With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Cynthia D. Balana, Christian V. Esguerra, AP*

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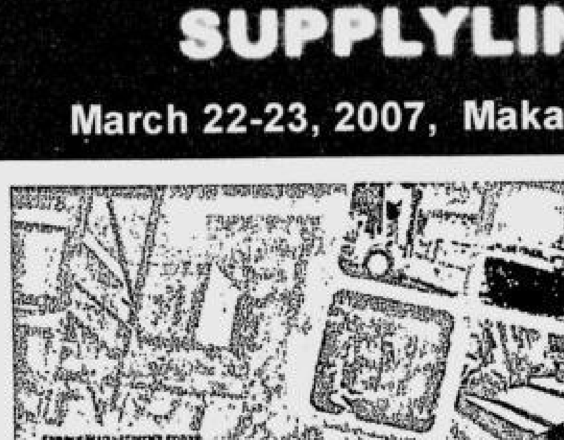

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Managing Transport Cost in Volatile Price Market with focus in Shipping
Integrating Customer Service in Supply Management (Order to Cash Process in Supply Management)
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MANDALUYONG CITY
LOT 2 – CMML LOT. Lot Area 450 sqm. Lot 32 Blk 15 Boni Avenue, Plainview. Minimum Bid Price 10,192,000
LOT 3 – LOT ONLY. Lot Area 651 sqm. San Ignacio St., Hulo. Minimum Bid Price 10,230,000

MANILA
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LOT 5 - LOT W/ 2-STOREY 4 UNITS CMML ALONG MAIN RD. Lot Area 289 sqm. Floor Area: 315 sqm. Lot 50 JP Rizal St., Malanday. Minimum Bid Price 5,078,000
LOT 6 – CMML LOT W/ 2-STOREY BLDG ALONG MAIN RD. Lot Area 72.25 sqm. Floor Area 85.5 sqm. Lot 51-C JP Rizal St., Malanday. Minimum Bid Price 1,549,000
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Village East II, Phase I, Brgy. San Isidro, Angono
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LOT 18 - LOT ONLY. Lot Area 350 sqm. B34 L3. Minimum Bid Price 341,000
LOT 19 - LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT. Lot Area 999.05 sqm. 44 Gen. Antonio Luna Ave., Sto. Balanti, Ampid, San Mateo. Minimum Bid Price 7,493,000
Town & Country Estates, Brgy. Sta. Cruz, Antipolo City
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LOT 21 - LOT ONLY. Lot Area 794 sqm. Lot 13-A, Block 14, Kingsway St. Minimum Bid Price 2,085,000
LOT 22 - LOT ONLY. Lot Area 1,244 sqm. Lot 11, Blk 7-A, Birmingham St. Minimum Bid Price 3,266,000
LOT 23 - LOT ONLY. Lot Area 1,353 sqm. Lot 12, Blk 7-A, Birmingham St. Minimum Bid Price 3,552,000

BATANGAS CITY
LOT 24 – CMML LOT W/ 2-STOREY BLDG. Lot Area 361 sqm. Floor Area various. Km. 104 National Rd., Brgy. Kumintang Ilaya. Minimum Bid Price 5,243,000
LOT 25 – CMML LOT W/ 3-STOREY BLDG. Lot Area 228 sqm. Floor Area 594 sqm. P. Zamora St., Poblacion. Minimum Bid Price 5,908,000

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BTP 8 – LOT ONLY. Lot Area 617.5 sqm. Lots 9 & 10 Blk 1 Aguinaldo Highway, Tanzang Luma, Sta. Rosa, Laguna. Minimum Bid Price 12,350,000
BTP 9 – LOT ONLY. Lot Area: 1,495 sqm. Lot 13 & 14 Blk 1 Promenade Ave., Promenade Subd., Sta. Rosa, Laguna. Minimum Bid Price 12,259,000

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To have, hold, cherish– but sleep separately

From page A1

In a survey in February by the National Association of Home Builders in the United States, builders and architects predicted that more than 60 percent of custom houses would have dual master bedrooms by 2015, according to Gopal Ahluwalia, staff vice president of research at the builders association. Some builders say more than a quarter of their new projects already do.

In the Central West End district of St. Louis, Lana Pepper, a light sleeper who battled for years with her husband's nocturnal restlessness, reconfigured the condominium they bought recently, adding walls and building closets to create separate bedrooms. Pepper said the advantage was obvious: "My husband is still alive. I would have killed him."

Sleep interference

According to the National Sleep Foundation in Washington, 75 percent of adults frequently either wake up in the night or snore—and many of them have taken to separate beds just for those reasons. In a report issued Tuesday, the foundation found that more than half the women surveyed, aged 18 to 64, said they slept well only a few nights a week; 43 percent felt their lack of sleep interfered with the next day's activities.

Stephanie Coontz, director of public education for the Council of Contemporary Families in Chicago, said many couples she interviewed were "confident enough that they have a nice marriage, but they don't particularly like sleeping in the same room. I don't think it says anything about their sex lives."

In St. Louis, Carol Wall, president of Mitchell Wall Architects, said that three or four years ago, her company began "doing a lot of these little rooms off the master bedroom where the snorer would go." More recently, couples, including some in their 30s, have started asking for two master suites, "and we don't ask any questions," Wall said.

Not everyone wants to talk about it. Many architects and designers say their clients feel there is still a stigma to sleeping separately. Some developers say it is a delicate issue and call the other bedroom a "flex suite" for when the in-laws visit or the children come home from college. Charles Brandt, an interior designer in St. Louis, said, "The builder knows, the architect knows, the cabinet maker knows, but it's not something they like to advertise because, right away, people will think something is wrong" with the marriage.

New York Times News Service

Police raid reenacts repressive ...

From page A1

of the Philippines of the murder of a number of party members in an internal party purge in Leyte in 1984.

"They forced their way in without my permission," Malay said. "They climbed our gate, looked inside the closets and under the beds. They even knocked on the ceiling and searched our storeroom." They also searched the houses of Ocampo's neighbors.

Forcing Ocampo's hand

Ocampo, a party-list member of Congress representing the leftist Bayan Muna party, was not home.

In the crackdown of 1972, Ocampo was on the wanted list and, like most leaders of the CPP, including party chair Jose Ma. Sison, he had gone underground when Marcos ordered the mass arrests.

Today, after he had gone aboveground to join the parliamentary mainstream following the legalization of the CPP, the authorities are enforcing the new government policy of crushing the communist movement by 2010. They are driving Ocampo underground again.

Although the head of the raiding team presented a photocopy of the arrest warrant, it was no more than a token compliance of the legal process. It was the manner by which the raid was conducted and the circumstances surrounding it that revealed its arbitrariness.

Memories of Asso

Unable to serve the warrant because Ocampo was not home, 20 policemen in civilian clothes and armed with assault rifles, scaled the eight-foot wall of the compound where his house stood.

The warrant was a bit of an improvement on Marcos' method. When he ordered the roundup in 1972, search parties were armed with mimeographed copies of the Arrest and Search and Seizure Order (Asso) signed by then Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile.

The Asso read like a blank check. It compressed in two pages a generalized catalogue of crimes in the Penal Code, including rebellion, inciting to sedition, income tax evasion, smuggling, corruption, etc., without specifications—slapped on "enemies of the state."

Closing democratic space

The charge against Ocampo had been hibernating in the courts for more than a decade. The warrant was sprung in the midst of an election in which Ocampo's party-list group was again running for congressional seats, suggesting that the government was attempting to close the tiny space of the party-list candidates in the legal parliamentary system by crippling his campaign.

There is not much substantive difference between Marcos' Asso and the warrant on Ocampo, in arbitrariness. Police dug up an old complaint on murders which occurred when Ocampo, among the political detainees tortured during his incarceration in Marcos' jails from 1976 to 1985, was in detention.

Nobody is safe

The raid sends the warning that the government can dig up any old case on rebellion and order the arrest of an accused any time at its convenience. Nobody is safe from this procedure.

The heavy-handed method in the raid sharpens the predisposition of the security forces to use the mailed-fist in dealing with those perceived as political opponents of the regime.

The government demonstrated this approach in January, when a 200-man, heavily armed police task force stormed the Iloilo provincial capitol to enforce the dismissal order issued by the Ombudsman on Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas for administrative offenses.

President's wishes

The raid and the new crackdown on the Left flowed from the policy matrix laid down by President Macapagal-Arroyo mandating the security forces to wage an "all-out" war against the communist movement. This mandate provided the rationale of the military-police crackdown, which has claimed the lives of hundreds of leftist militants operating inside the legal system.

At the hearing of the Melo Commission on the extrajudicial killings, Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, the Armed Forces chief of staff, and retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan testified that the armed forces considered the so-called left wing and some party-list organizations, and their members "enemies of the state," who should be "neutralized."

Heavy-handed approach

Palparan, who has been held by the commission responsible for the spate of the extrajudicial killings in his areas of command under the doctrine of command responsibility, indicated at the hearing how he understood his mandate under the President's "all-out war" on the communist insurgency.

One piece of evidence introduced at the hearing was a press statement he made on May 21, 2006, which said: "I want communism totally erased." He said his mission was "to wage the ongoing counterinsurgency ... by neutralizing not just armed rebels but also a web of alleged front organizations that include leftist political parties."

This mind-set appears to set the tone of the heavy-handed approach of the security forces in the crackdown on the legal Left. The raid on the Ocampo house is the latest manifestation of this tough anticommunist outlook. It flowed directly from the policy mandate set by the President.

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Now is the right time to run, says Pacquiao

From page A1

his career and popularity.

In an interview aired over a local TV station here on Friday, the Filipino ring idol said that if he wins, he could help his constituents because of his influence and popularity.

"*Kailan pa ako tatakbo, pag laos na ako? May maniniwala pa ba sa akin? Mas* advantage *sa akin na tumakbo ngayon kasi sikat ako* (When should I run for office—when I am a has-been? Who will believe in me? If I run now, I have the advantage because I am very popular)," he said.

Pacquiao said if he won a seat in Congress, he would invite businessmen to invest in his district. He would work with local leaders on various projects that would benefit his province.

Pacquiao has signified his intention to run for Congress in the first congressional district of South Cotabato, which is composed of General Santos City and the towns of Polomolok, Tupi and Tampakan.

The district has not received any funds for projects from the national government since incumbent Rep. Darlene Antonino-Custodio joined the opposition lawmakers' impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo in 2004.

Pacquiao said no one had asked him to run against Custodio. He said he had a mind of his own and Malacañang was not using him to oust Custodio from Congress.

Many people, however, doubt Pacman's capability and competence to be a legislator.

Instead of being discouraged, the "people's champ" said this became a challenge for him to pursue his political dream.

"*Alam niyo imbes na panghinaan ng loob, mas lalo akong nacha*-challenge *eh. Kagaya rin ito ng* boxing *na habang nabubugbog ako ay lalo ako tumatapang* (Instead of being discouraged, the more I am challenged. It's like boxing. The more punches you throw at me, the stronger I become)," Pacquiao said.

He said he was fed up with traditional politics.

"*Tama na yong pulitika na puro lang pangako. Pag ako ang nanalo bilang* congressman, *gagawin ko lahat para makakuha ng* projects *para sa* city *at sa distrito ko* (I've had enough of politicians who keep making promises. If I win, I will do everything to get projects for my city and my district)," Pacquiao said.

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SPORTS

ALEX Cabagnot of Sta. Lucia flicks a pass against the defense of Welcoat's Alex Compton. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

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Alaska, Welcoat triumph

GAMES TODAY (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:35 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs Coca-Cola
7:20 p.m.—San Miguel Beer vs Air21

By Musong R. Castillo

CHARLES CLARK CAME OUT hard to erase a negative first impression, and Jireh Ibañez played so great t he now has a new reputation to live up to.

Playing a dream offensive game, Ibañez scored 25 points and helped Clark fuel Welcoat's 114-104 upset of Sta. Lucia Realty at the Araneta Coliseum last night, leaving the rock-solid Realtors winless in the PBA Fiesta Cup eliminations.

A confessed and proven stopper, Ibañez later said that it was the highest-scoring game he could remember, and it came at a time when the newcomer Dragons brought down the most fancied team in the lot to improve to 1-1.

"I was just ready to step up. I felt that this (game) was my chance," said Ibañez, a 24-year-old UP graduate whose recollection of a career-high game in any level of competition was 14 points.

"I have been a stopper ever since, although I really work hard on my (offensive) game."

Willie Miller's jumper from the keyhole with 3.3 seconds left lifted Alaska to a 100-98 decision of debuting Barangay Ginebra in the second game for a piece of the early lead.

Miller finished with 26 points and Rosell Ellis wound up with 27 markers, 16 rebounds and two crucial taps in the dying seconds as the Aces joined Red Bull and Coca-Cola on top at 2-0.

Rookie Sta. Lucia coach Boyet Fernandez, whose roster was untouched by the national team, tried all sorts of combinations and got none to work as his high-priced local crew again failed to respond in the manner it was expected.

The scores:

First Game

Welcoat 114—Clark 37, Ibañez 25, Lopez 14, Reyes 9, Compton 8, Cabatu 8, Gelig 5, Bagulon 4, Wainwright 4, Lao 0.

Sta. Lucia 104—Winston 32, Omolon 21, Williams 12, Espino 12, Cabagnot 9, Duremdes 6, Catli 5, Calimag 5, Bughao 2, Islp 0, Aquino 0, Gonzales 0, Mendoza 0.

Quarters: 25-23, 62-53, 90-67, 114-104.

Second Game

ALASKA 100—Ellis 27, Miller 26, Thoss 14, Cariaso 11, Hugnatan 6, Singson 6, Laure 4, Aban 2, Ferriols 2, Belasco 2.

BARANGAY GINEBRA 98—Nealy 31, Salvacion 18, Tubid 13, Hatfield 11, Macapagal 8, Echavez 6, Abarrientos 6, Mamaril 3, Menk 2, Santos 0.

Quarters: 26-22, 40-49, 70-75, 100-98.

National team starts practice

THE STAR-STUDDED PHILIPPINE BASKETball team practices for the first time today, taking the first of many steps in the road which many hope would lead all the way to the Olympics in China next year.

A couple of faces are expected to miss the 1 p.m. practice at the Moro Lorenzo gym in Katipunan as Chot Reyes and other members of the coaching staff preside over the session.

Mark Caguioa and Jay-Jay Helterbrand are still reportedly on the way back to the country from a brief vacation in the United States.

The other members are Asi Taulava, Jimmy Alapag, Ren-Ren Ritualo, Tony dela Cruz, Kerby Raymundo, Ranidel de Ocampo, Dondon Hontiveros and Danny Seigle and alternates Rudy Hatfield, Enrico Villanueva, Rafi Reavis and Rommel Adducul.

Hatfield was selected into the first team but begged off because of his scheduled wedding to Brittany Herr in August. *Musong Castillo*

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Robbery gang member falls in Caloocan

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A SUSPECTED MEMBER OF A NOTORIOUS BURGLARY GANG operating in Metro Manila and northern Luzon was arrested during a police operation in Caloocan City on Saturday night.

Chief Supt. Pedro Tango, Northern Police District director, said operatives of the Caloocan City police arrested Rafael Poblete, believed to be a member of the "Gapos Gang." Four other members escaped.

According to the police, the gang breaks into houses, ties up and gags the occupants before making off with their cash and other valuables.

Police also seized five firearms found in the gang's vehicle, including an M-16 Armalite and a .380 Llama pistol.

According to Supt. William Macavinta, Caloocan City police chief, the barangay captain of Bisig ng Nayon, Sangandaan reported the presence of suspected gang members in their area at around 10 p.m. Saturday.

While waiting for the law enforcers to arrive, the barangay chief confronted the suspects who were on board a Ford Lynx, he added.

Macavinta said that when the police came, four of the suspects quickly escaped, leaving behind Poblete who was the gang's driver.

Aside from the Armalite and the Llama pistol, the police found also two .45 caliber pistols and a .38 caliber revolver inside the suspects' car.

"Our operatives also recovered several bonnets, two bolt cutters and masking tape which the suspects used in gagging and tying up their victims," Macavinta said.

Poblete, who initially denied involvement in the group, later admitted to the police that their group operated in northern Luzon and Metro Manila, particularly in Quezon City and Valenzuela.

METRO Citizen's call
0918-8985566

A STREAMER is blocking the traffic lights on Mayon Street corner N. Roxas, causing traffic jams because motorists cannot see the lights. Attention to those concerned. Please get rid of this obstruction.
—LILY S., 46, Mayon Street, Quezon City

Calling the attention of Quezon City Councilor W. Castelo. Your posters are hanging on cable lines at the intersection of Mindanao and Congressional Avenues. They are road hazards since they cover the traffic lights in the area and could be dangerous, especially to motorists.
—SUSAN PUENTEBELLA, 47, Quezon City

Please let the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority act on this request promptly before anything bad happens. Maybe they can put up an overpass or bridge for pedestrians on Edsa extension going to the SM Mall of Asia. People find it hard to cross Edsa, especially near Mabini Street. Please act fast. Thank you.
—DALE, 42, Makati City

My driver was inside our van when teenagers with knives came up and demanded money from him at Moriones in front of Sulpicio, near the Makro outlet close to Smokey Mountain in Tondo. I hope this does not happen frequently but maybe a police patrol near the area can help. Thanks.
—JEAN, 35, Quezon City

Job-hunting made easier

By DJ Yap

LOOKING FOR A JOB? GO TO YOUR BARANGAY hall.

Makati residents will soon find it easier to look up job vacancies as the city's Public Employment Services Office will establish satellite offices in 27 barangays.

Mayor Jejomar Binay said in a statement that the satellite offices, which will open officially on March 19, shall serve as an extension arm of the PESO.

Job seekers will no longer have to go to City Hall because they can register directly in their barangay halls. They will later be matched up with jobs suited to their qualifications. In addition, they will receive a recommendation letter from the PESO officer which they can present to prospective employers.

DO YOU KNOW

ALMOST 800 women living in Metro Manila died of pregnancy-related causes from 2000 to 2003. The figure accounted for 11 percent of 7,065 maternal deaths recorded nationwide during the same period.
Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

METRO Citizen's call
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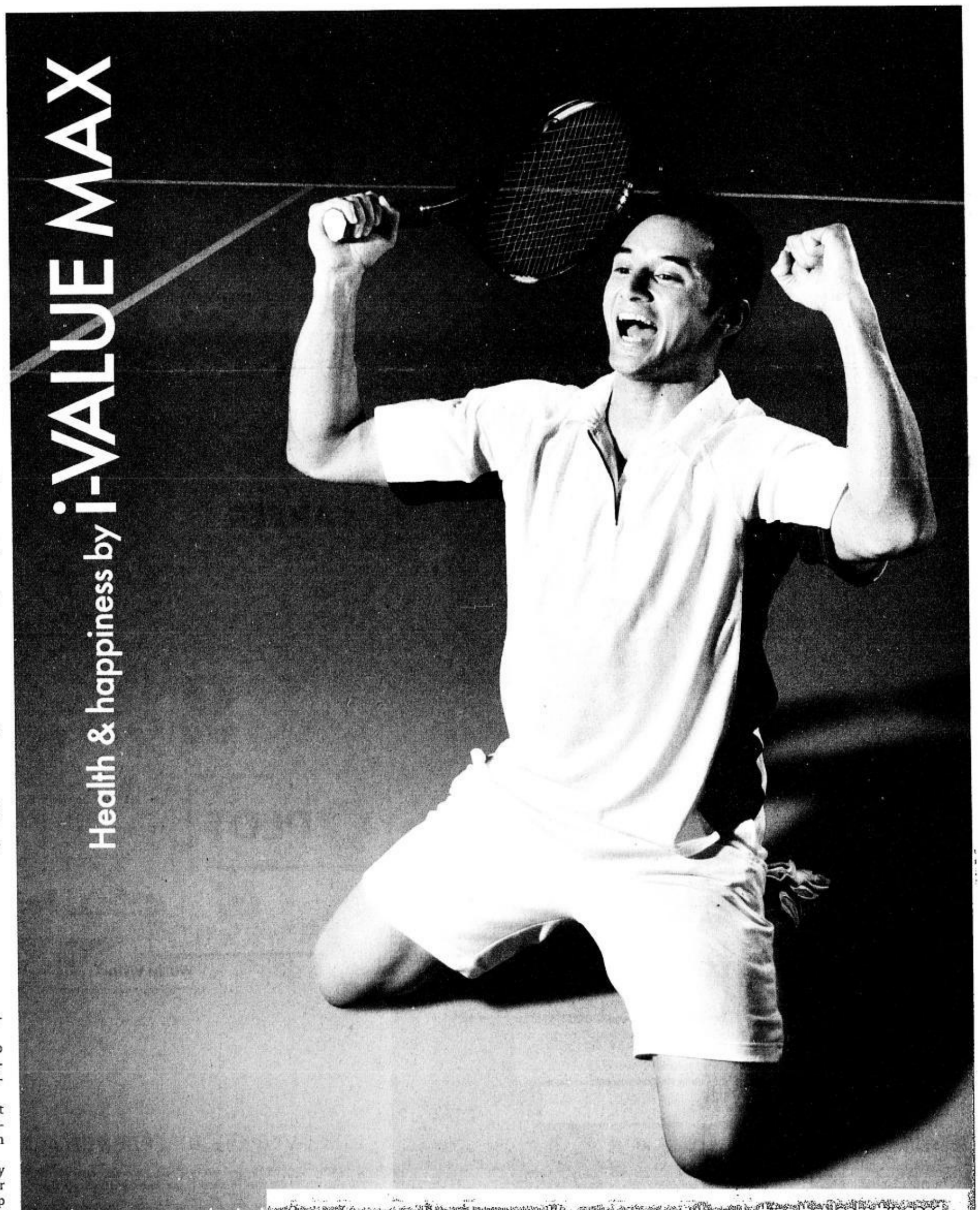
WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE
A reader who identified himself only as Raymond of Quezon City complained about several busted water pipes on Banawe corner N. Roxas Streets in Quezon City. There are many more near the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. office at Mabuhay Rotunda, also in Quezon City, he added.
EDWIN BACASMAS



Museums, not malls, are her cup of tea

By Tina G. Santos

SHE COULD HAVE TAKEN A high-paying job in another country.

But Carmelea "Meah" Ang See chose to remain in the Philippines and make a difference.

Meah, the 30-year-old daughter of Chinese-Filipino community leader and anticrime crusader Teresita Ang See, is a museum curator and guide, apart from being a teacher and volunteer worker.

She is also vice president of Kaisa Para sa Kaunlaran Inc., a cause-oriented organization that aims to integrate "Tsinoys" or Tsinong Pinoys into mainstream society. Her mother is the founding president.

The organization runs the Kaisa-Angelo King Heritage Center—more popularly known as Bahay Tsinoy—a three-story museum in Intramuros, Manila which showcases Chinese-Filipino history and culture.

Meah is not only the curator of this museum, she also serves as a guide at times.

Curatorial to janitorial

"Actually, my work ranges from curatorial to janitorial," she said with a laugh. "I put up exhibits, I take students and visitors around the museum and I also clean up."

Through her work, Meah said she hopes to help people appreciate the unique blend of Filipino and Chinese cultures and the intertwining destinies of the two races throughout history.

Her work at the museum is right up her alley, considering her fascination since childhood "with anything about history, arts and culture."

Unlike other girls her age, Meah said she enjoyed going to different museums more than browsing in department stores.

"I hate malls, I only go there to buy something essential," she admitted. "I'd rather take my younger cousins to different museums than stroll in malls."

Her interest in Kaisa's advocacy, on the other hand, began when she was still a child.

Meah said that when she and her brother were younger, their mother used to take them to the organization's former office in Binondo.

"I enjoyed staying there a lot. That's where I basically learned secretarial work: Typing letters, organizing files and clipping newspaper articles," she said. "Since we had no nanny, my mom would always take us with her."

"I think I absorbed everything my mother knows through osmosis. And have you heard her talk? She's super *magulo* (hyper) but I'm more *magulo*. I think I really took after her," Meah said, adding that her brother was the complete opposite: A techie who is quiet and reserved.

Meah initially took up English Literature at the Ateneo de Manila University but shifted to Communication Arts. "My dream then was to become a news anchor of the BBC (British Broadcasting Corp.)," she said.

After graduation, she had a change of heart and decided to pursue a master's degree in education at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

For the past six years, Meah has been teaching education part time at the De La Salle University and the Pamantasan Lungsod ng Maynila.

She said her dream was for her students "to take what I teach to heart and be more than what I have become."

"Whenever I'm in class, I always try to remind my students that they're better than what they deal with and that they have to strive to be better than their teachers," Meah said, adding that she finds her students amazing and teaching them a rewarding experience.

CARMELEA "Meah" Ang See: Both museum curator and guide. At times, she also cleans up. PHOTOS BY RYAN LIM

No complaints

But she's not too ecstatic about the financial rewards, although she's not complaining.

"Before I took up my masters, I asked my mom first if she was willing to support me for life once I become a teacher and remain unmarried," she said. "I was glad she said yes. I asked my husband the same question before we got married. I told him to just pretend that I'm a housewife."

But more than anything, Meah said she finds fulfillment in doing volunteer work as a teacher.

She is a member of the Bagong Kulturang Pinoy Inc., a nonprofit organization that hopes to instill a love of reading in children living in poverty-stricken areas.

BAHAY Tsinoy in Intramuros, Manila, is a three-story mansion that has been converted into a museum. It showcases the Chinese-Filipino history and culture.

Along with other volunteers, she collects children's books for libraries that they have set up in different areas in the country. They also conduct read aloud sessions to expose young children to the joy of reading.

"Our objective is to raise the literacy level. But at the very least, we hope that every child will learn how to read," Meah stressed, adding that she conducts training programs for daycare workers and elementary school teachers.

She is also among the convenors of RockEd Philippines, a movement cited by the United Nations' Millennium Development Campaign aimed at developing patriotism and good citizenship among the youth.

RockEd stands for "Rock Society Through Education." As the name implies, it integrates rock music, visual arts and other unconventional teaching mediums that can make discussions of social issues more appealing to the new generation.

Meah added that their group also wants to contribute in the fight against poverty.

State of mind

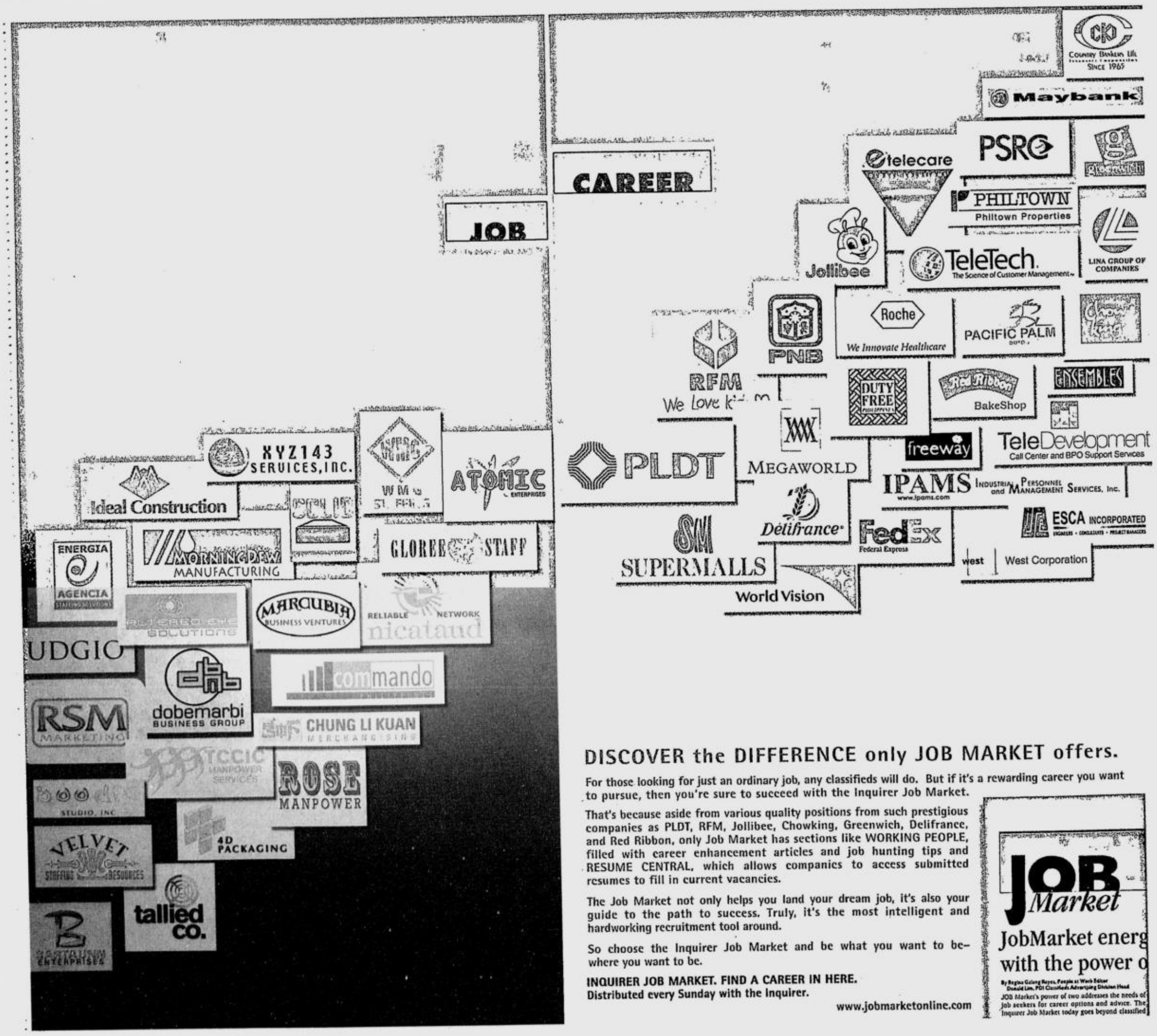
Poverty starts as a state of mind, she said. "It shows in Filipinos perpetually complaining about how difficult times are, yet are too lazy and cynical to do something to improve their lives. I've seen some of my friends leave the country when they don't have to."

She herself could have packed up her bags and left the country a long time ago, she told the INQUIRER.

"I know I can get a job easily because I'm a teacher, I know the profession is in demand in other countries," Meah said. "I'm not superwoman *pero meron akong konting galing* (but I am also quite good). And who will benefit from that if I leave? I want the people who I will be with for the rest of my life, the Filipinos, to benefit from my knowledge."

"This is where I belong. I'm a Filipino with a lot of Chinese blood," she added with pride.

Indeed, while her looks clearly indicate her Chinese roots, what she does and feels only prove that she is as much a Filipino at heart and in spirit.



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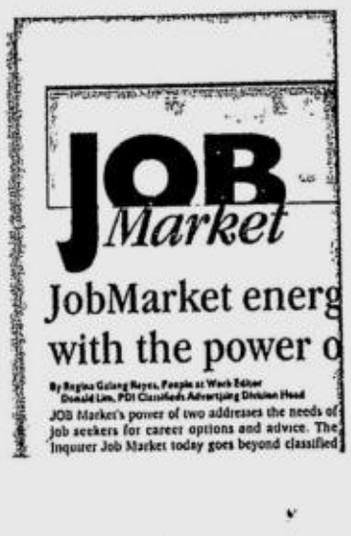

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Iraq declares Baghdad meet a success

BAGHDAD—IRAQ SIGNALLED THAT WORLD powers and neighboring countries, including Washington and its adversaries Iran and Syria, had agreed in Baghdad it was vital to all to stop sectarian violence spreading in the region.

But while US President George W. Bush on Saturday ordered 4,400 more US troops to be sent to Iraq on top of a force build up he has already authorized, Iran called for the withdrawal of all US forces on grounds they fueled violence.

After Saturday's Baghdad talks between senior officials, the United States said Turkey had offered to host a planned follow-up ministerial-level conference in April and that US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice would attend the meeting.

Two mortar bombs exploded near the Baghdad conference building shortly after the talks began. Elsewhere in the capital, a suicide car bomber killed six Iraqi soldiers and wounded about 20 in yet another day of violence.

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki urged other countries in the oil-rich region to stop supporting insurgents and do all they could to help Baghdad, saying it was in everyone's interest to stop sectarian bloodletting from spilling over Iraq's borders.

"The meeting was constructive and positive in fact in its atmosphere and the composition," Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari told a news conference. He said committees had been set up to cover security, refugees and fuel and power.

Iraq, which called the Baghdad talks, has been plagued by a Sunni Arab insurgency almost since US-led forces toppled Saddam Hussein in 2003. The country's minority Sunnis were dominant under Saddam.

But mounting sectarian violence between Sunnis and majority Shiite Muslims has become a major issue since the bombing of a Shiite shrine a year ago. Since 2003 tens of thousands have been killed and some two million driven abroad.

"No country represented at the table would benefit from a disintegrated Iraq. Indeed, all would suffer badly," the US ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad, told reporters.

Khalilzad said he had talked directly to Iranian delegates as well as in a group setting but the top Iranian official said he had had no one-to-one talks with US officials.

Abbas Araghchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs, said the talks had been constructive.

Washington accuses Syria and Shiite Iran of supporting militants in Iraq, a charge they deny.

Neighboring Sunni Arab countries, led by Saudi Arabia, fear the violence could escalate into full-scale civil war and spread beyond Iraq. They are concerned about the rise of Iraq's Shiite majority and the influence of Iran in the country. *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

Loyalists mark year since 'hero' Milosevic's death

MILOSEVIC AFP

POZAREVAC, SERBIA—Loyal supporters and party faithful paid their respects to former Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic on Saturday—marking the first anniversary of his death in custody. Hundreds laid flowers and lit candles at Milosevic's tomb within the compound of the late strongman's family home in Pozarevac, an industrial town some 70 km east of Belgrade. "You lived for Serbia, Serbia lives for you," read one message signed by a supporter named Sinisa in a book of condolences outside the front of the walled family residence. Milosevic rose to power by championing the Serb minority in Kosovo and its key place in Serb history that dates back to the middle ages. But Serb forces lost control of the province in an 11-week Nato bombing campaign prompted by their bloody crackdown on ethnic Albanian rebels seeking independence. The conflict also saw the mass displacement of Kosovo Albanians. His regime eventually crumbled in a popular uprising on Oct. 5, 2000, and, within months, he was handed over to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague. He died of natural causes in an ICTY prison cell at the age of 64, on March 11, just weeks before the end of his long-running trial for his role in the wars that tore apart the former Yugoslavia. *AFP*

Huge rally accuses Spain of surrender to ETA

MADRID—Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators rallied in Madrid on Saturday to vent their rage at what they say is the Spanish government's "surrender" to Basque separatist guerrilla group ETA. Angry at a government decision to grant house arrest to a multiple killer from ETA after he fell dangerously ill on hunger strike, protesters marched up Madrid's main 12-lane avenue in one of the biggest ETA-related protests ever seen. Flanked by Popular Party (PP) councilors—victims of ETA threats—opposition leader Mariano Rajoy marched behind a banner declaring, "Spain for freedom. No more concessions to ETA," as tens of thousands waved Spanish flags behind him. *Reuters*

Bush ignores protests, taunts in LatAm visit

BUSH AFP

MONTEVIDEO—Battling for the hearts and minds of Latin America, US President George W. Bush Saturday ignored protests and taunts by Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez aimed at undermining his regional goodwill tour. In talks with Uruguayan President Tabare Vazquez on the second leg of his five-nation trip, Bush sought to press his message of solidarity toward the region that has seen a rise in anti-US sentiment and the election of several leftist leaders in recent years. He made a point of refusing to acknowledge barbs from Venezuela's firebrand leader who on Friday taunted him as "political dead meat," at an "anti-imperialist" rally in Buenos Aires attended by some 35,000 people. Visiting Bolivia on Sunday, Chavez again lashed out at Bush, calling him "the chief of the empire." But Bush stuck to the soft message of his Latin American tour, saying during a news conference at the Uruguayan president's ranch Estancia Anchorena that he was conducting "quiet and effective diplomacy." *AFP*

Lebanon crisis talks gather pace

BEIRUT—Lebanon's parliamentary majority leader Saad Hariri met opposition speaker Nabih Berri overnight for their second round of talks in as many days, sparking hopes on Saturday of a breakthough in a 4-month-old political crisis. The two men discussed ways out of the crisis that has paralyzed the government's legislative program since November, was all that a brief dispatch from the official NNA news agency said. The two had met on Thursday night for their first talks since the crisis erupted with the resignation of six pro-Syrian ministers from the cabinet last November. After that encounter, both men issued identical statements, saying that their meeting had been "positive and identified points of convergence that require further consultation and discussions between the two parties." Shiite militant group Hezbollah, which has been spearheading opposition efforts to replace the rump anti-Syrian cabinet of Prime Minister Fuad Siniora with a government of national unity, said it supported the crisis talks. *AFP*

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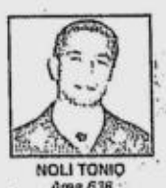
Top Area in Recruitment



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2nd Runner-up in Recruitment

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8th Place Royale Platinum Award

ANTHONY OCAMPO
Area 630
9th Place Royale Platinum Award

JONAS CANCILAO
Area 801
-3rd Place Royale Platinum Award

PRECY DIAZ
Area 808
-4th Place Royale Platinum Award

LILIA PECO
Area 803
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DELIA URBANO
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Area 602
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REBECCA PRIEL
Area 907
2nd Place Royale Diamond Award

RICHARD GONZALES
Area 904
3rd Place Royale Diamond Award

MA. MERLITA TONIO
Area 638
4th Place Royale Diamond Award

LEOBERTO MERCADO
Area 834
5th Place Royale Diamond Award

ROBERTO DIMARANAN
Area 1104
6th Place Royale Diamond Award

EDAL BIONA
Area 915
7th Place Royale Diamond Award

GLORIA CORNELIO
Area 1001
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SHEALTHIEL JECH OCZON
Area 1108
9th Place Royale Diamond Award

EVELYN SURALVO
Area 801
10th Place Royale Diamond Award

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WHAT'S INSIDE

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SPORTS

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■ Pine City athletes rule Olympic Festival /A32

Pacquiao cramming for Solis tiff

By Aquiles Z. Zonio, *Inquirer Mindanao*

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—PEOPLE'S CHAMPION MANNY PACquiao is cramming for his super featherweight bout against Mexican Jorge Solis, drawing concerns that he may not be fully prepared for the April 14 bout in San Antonio, Texas.

Pacquiao, the WBC International super featherweight champion, now tips the scales at 137 pounds, the lightest he has been at this point of his preparation for a fight.

Although he is fighting at the 130-lb ranks, experts say he is "dangerously underweight" at this stage, where he should be at around 140 lb.

PACQUIAO: Underweight

Pacquiao himself had earlier admitted that he is struggling with the heat and humidity in this seaside city.

Trainer Justin Fortune, who is handling the Filipino ring sensation in the absence of Freddie Roach, also expressed concern that Pacquiao has not reported for training at the Wild Card gym in Hollywood.

Roach took a leave from training Pacquiao as he is taking charge of Oscar De La Hoya's preparations for his match against Floyd Mayweather Jr. in May.

Roach, quoted by lawyer-sportsman Rudy Salud, said a boxer needs six weeks of no-nonsense training before a fight.

But Pacquiao said he is already "70 percent" prepared for his April 14 bout with the undefeated Solis.

Pacquiao claimed he has been training hard for about three weeks now at the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines gym here, which is managed by regional Abap chair Rey Golingan.

The Filipino ring icon said Solis is a tough fighter and he is not taking the Mexican for granted.

"I am not belittling Solis' capabilities," the Filipino told the INQUIRER in a phone interview in Filipino. "He is undefeated, so I believe he is tough."

Pacquiao refused to give a prediction on what would happen during his fight with Solis.

"I won't say I will knock him out, but I'll do my best for the country and for my countrymen," he said.

Golingan described Pacquiao as very focused in training.

"I don't think Manny still needs the guidance of coach Roach," Golingan said. "He's doing well even on his own with the help of his Filipino trainer, Buboy Fernandez."

Pacquiao also said his rigid training will not hamper his plan to join the congressional race here. Instead, he said, it would give him extra stamina to withstand the rigors of a political campaign.

He said he is spending his free time going around the city and the entire first district meeting people.

Last month, Pacquiao launched "People's Champ Movement," which gives free accident insurance to all its members.

According to him, PCM has about 200,000 members.

He said there's no membership fee being collected.

"It's just my way of helping my countrymen and this has nothing to do with the elections," he said.

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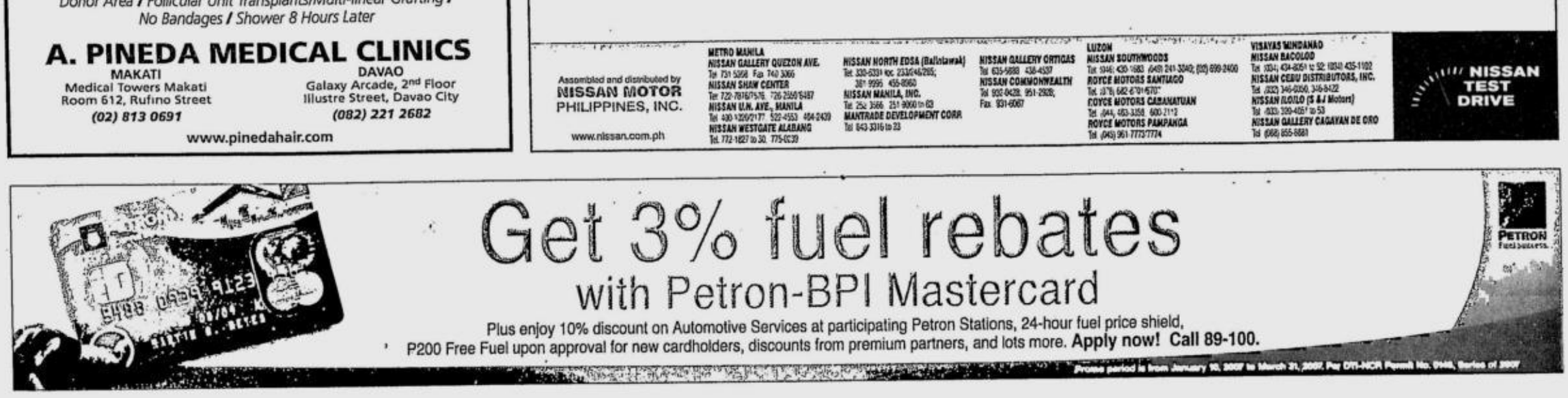


Quezon, Tagaytay cagers draw first blood

GAMES TODAY
(Tolentino Sports Center, Tagaytay)
2 p.m.—Quezon vs Pagadian
4 p.m.—Tagaytay vs Pacman-Gensan

LUCENA CITY—HOST QUEZON Villa Anita and Tagaytay Spring Cooking Oil struck the first "knockout" blows as the 2007 NBC National Cup unwrapped Saturday at the Quezon Convention Center here.

Ex-pro Bryan Gahol and Paolo Malonzo sparkled in the closing minutes as Gov. Wilfredo Enverga's Villa Anita cagers held off Manny Pacquiao's Warriors, 71-64, in the opener before a big home crowd.

The Cooking Oil Masters of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Tagaytay Mayor Bambol Tolentino then banked on the tough backcourt duo of Ryan Regalado and Nino Marquez to subdue Mayor Sammy Co's Pagadian Explorers, 76-73, in the other match.

GOV. Enverga gets set to make the ceremonial toss between Villa Anita's Ruel Buenaventura (left) and MP Pacman Gensan's Rolly Menor. Enverga was assisted by his son Mark and NBC president Padilla (in yellow shirt).

Trailing by as many as 11 points, the Warriors grabbed the lead 61-59, midway in the last quarter. But Gahol's two baskets sandwiched a Malonzo triple in a torrid 7-0 run to put Quezon back in the lead.

Quezon then held Pacman scoreless in a two-minute stretch before Apol Coronado broke through with a triple in the dying seconds.

The Explorers, who threatened to wipe out a 12-point deficit, were hurt by consecutive turnovers in the last two minutes. They also missed the services of injured Nelson Asaystono and playing coach Peter Naron, who decided to concentrate on his bench assisgnment.

The scores:

First Game

QUEZON 71—Gahol 14, Mendoza 12, Villar 10, Buenaventura 9, Zuniga 4, Agapito 4, Gonzales 2, Veranga 2, Drio 2, De Guia 1, De Leon 0, Menor 0.

MP PACMAN 64—Coronado 22, Rol Menor 11, Locsin 10, Tadena 5, Celiz 4, Dennison 4, Medalla 3, Callo 2, Recustodio 2, Farochillen 1, Roda 0.

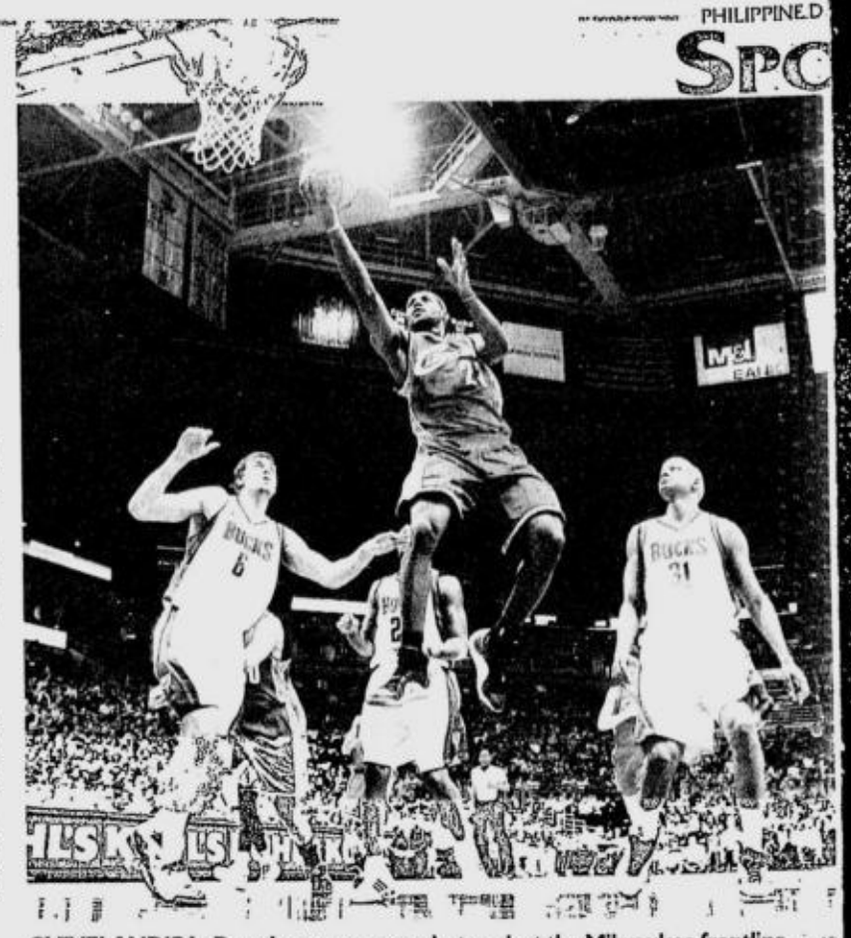
Quarters: 24-17, 36-33, 54-50, 71-64

Second Game

TAGAYTAY SPRING 76—Regalado 22, Marquez 16, Bolocon 9, Legaspi 7, Mallari 7, Tajonera 6, Munoz 3, Bamson 2, Reyes 2, Salud 2.

PAGADIAN 73—Mamaclay 22, Huelar 11, Villaver 9, Orquillas 9, Saludsod 8, Daja 6, Cortez 4, Pamaran 2, Sinco 2, Omandam 0, Quillo 0, Arquero 0, Ayuk 0.

Quarters: 20-19, 38-39, 67-55, 76-73



CLEVELAND'S LeBron James scoops a shot against the Milwaukee frontline. AP

Toyota, Harbour have new names

By Jasmine W. Payo

TOYOTA OTIS YESterday unveiled its new name "Toyota Balintawak Roadkings," just weeks after Harbour Centre traded its moniker "Port Master" for "Batang Pier."

Gil Angeles, PBL chair and Board of Governors team representative, said the young squad will carry the franchise's new name when the 2007 Unity Cup fires off next month.

Save for the name change, Angeles said there will be no team shakeup for Toyota Balintawak.

Coach Louie Alas will still call the shots for the Roadkings, while Baby Oben, brother of team owner Rey Oben will be back as team manager.

Harbour Centre owner Mikee Romero, meanwhile, said his team hopes to touch base with the masses through the moniker Batang Pier.

"We want to be identified more with the masses," noted Romero. "We're surprised to have a fan base even in the Visayas and Mindanao."

SPORTS WATCH

Pasay derby under way

SOME 70 FIGHTS ARE on tap starting at 5 p.m. today in the Sagupaan Complexor 3000-sponsored Fatman and Mikko 6-Cock Derby at the Pasay City Cockpit. Host Pepito Ngo said the event drew entries from cockers groups such as PCCA, GCAP, PCAP, NCA, LGBA and NGBA. Two-cock elimination rounds are scheduled today and Wednesday, with the championship round set on Friday. A guaranteed prize of P1.5 million will go to the winners.

Davao Day 6-cocker starts

THE 2007 ARAW NG Dabaw 6-Cock Derby gets going today at the Davao Matina Gallera in Davao City, with Thunderbird Power Feeds and Univet as sponsors. Today's action, sponsored by Thunderbird Platinum, features the first of a three-day 3-cock elimination (70 entries). The next 3-cock preliminaries, backed by Bexan-XP, sizzles on Wednesday (70 entries). The 3-cock championship round, sponsored by Thunderbird Stag Developer, is on Friday.

Winston

Government Warning: Cigarette sm

76ers, Spurs on a roll

INDIANAPOLIS—ANDRE IGUODALA SCORED 25 points, and the Philadelphia 76ers won their seventh straight Saturday night with a 100-96 victory over the Indiana Pacers, who have lost eight in a row.

Danny Granger and Troy Murphy each scored 18 points, while Mike Dunleavy and Ike Diogu added 17 apiece for the undermanned Pacers, who have their longest losing streak since the 1988-1989 season.

Point guard Jamaal Tinsley was suspended for the game for conduct detrimental to the team. Jermaine O'Neal, Indiana's leading scorer, rebounder and shot blocker, sat out with a sprained left knee and Marquis Daniels, a key reserve, sat out with a sore left knee.

In San Antonio, Tony Parker scored 19 points to lead a balanced effort, and the Spurs routed the slumping New Jersey Nets, 93-77, for their 12th straight victory.

Tim Duncan added 17 points and 13 rebounds, while Manu Ginobili had 12 points and Brent Barry scored 11.

Vince Carter had 17 for the Nets, who have lost five straight. Mikki Moore added 14 points and Josh Boone scored 11, but Jason Kidd had only seven before he was ejected in the third quarter after picking up a pair of technical fouls.

Nets coach Lawrence Frank was also ejected.

In Washington, Steve Francis swished a 3-pointer at the buzzer to complete a late comeback and lift the New York Knicks over the Wizards, 90-89, moving the Knicks into a tie for eighth place in the Eastern Conference.

Francis, who finished with 26 points and seven rebounds, dribbled behind his back to get space away from defender Antonio Daniels and released the ball with about a second on the clock. When the ball went through, he hopped on the scorers' table, crossed his arms and nodded at the crowd, before teammates mobbed him. After Francis got down, Nate Robinson jumped on the guard's back for a ride across the court.

Gilbert Arenas finished with 25 points.

In other NBA games, it was Atlanta 99, Minnesota 93; Memphis 115, Charlotte 107; Cleveland 94, Milwaukee 92 and Utah 96, New Orleans 86

In Milwaukee, LeBron James had 32 points and nine assists, the last one to Anderson Varejao for the winning layup, and Cleveland rallied to beat Milwaukee.

Michael Redd scored 29 points, but failed to force overtime when his short jumper missed. The Bucks lost their 12th straight game against Central Division teams since beating the Detroit Pistons in the season opener for both teams on Nov. 1.

The Cavaliers (37-25) won their fourth straight, pulling within two games of Detroit for first place in the Central Division and Eastern Conference. It was James' sixth consecutive game with 32 or more points. Jazz 96, Hornets 86

At Salt Lake City, Carlos Boozer had 20 points and 13 rebounds, and Deron Williams added 13 assists to lead Utah over New Orleans for its sixth straight victory. *AP*

A-Rod ousts Lopez; Nadal marches on

INDIAN WELLS, CALIFORNIA—Andy Roddick defeated Feliciano Lopez, 7-6 (4), 6-4, in his opening match of the Pacific Life Open on Saturday night.

In a second-round matchup of hard-servers, Roddick started the first-set tiebreaker with a 137-mph (220 kph) ace and finished it with another ace at 123 mph. The third-seeded American got a quick break in the second set and cruised from there against his Spanish opponent.

Lopez didn't have a break in the match.

Second-seed Rafael Nadal, who lost to James Blake in last year's semifinal, beat France's Arnaud Clement, 6-3, 7-6.

"I feel very good with my forehand," the 20-year-old Spaniard said. "Maybe today was not my best match, but I am a more complete tennis player now than in 2005."

Earlier, California teenager Sam Querrey defeated Belgium's Christophe Rochus, 6-2, 6-4.

In women's second-round play, Russians Svetlana Kuznetsova and Nadia Petrova, the second- and fourth-seeded players, advanced in straight sets. But three other seeds stumbled.

Unseeded Laura Granville bounced No. 27 Severine Bremond, 6-3, 7-6; Russia's Elena Likhovtseva upset countrywoman Olga Poutchkova (26th), and Alicia Molik beat Anabel Medina Garrigues (24) in three sets. *AP*

Liang takes it; Lascuña top Pinoy

SINGAPORE—CHINA's Liang Wenchong parred the 18th hole to beat Malaysia's Iain Steel in a sudden-death playoff and win the Singapore Masters on Sunday.

The 28-year-old Liang's maiden victory outside China ensured he became the second Chinese to win on the European Tour, emulating Zhang Lianwei, who captured the same event in 2003.

Liang closed out with a 73 and Steel turned in a 71 to finish the $1.1-million European and Asian Tour event at 11-under 277, a stroke clear of Britain's Simon Dyson (71), who was alone in third after he missed a 20-foot birdie putt on No. 18 by inches.

Antonio Lascuña matched par 72 to be the best-placed Filipino at 284, in a tie for 30th place with six others including overnight co-leader Gary Lockerbie of Britain (80) and Japan's Shingo Katayama (73).

Frenchman Jean Van de Velde (69) and Britons David Lynn (69), Anthony Wall (67) and 2005 champion Nick Dougherty (71) ended the tournament in a tie for fourth at 279.

It was RP ace Frankie Miñoza's turn to collapse this time as he closed out with an 8-over 80 and wound up in an eight-way tie for 55th at 289.

He stood two in front of Angelo Que (72-291), who gave up his bid for a decent finish Saturday with a similar 80.

Gerard Rosales fired a 73 and was the second-best Filipino at 286, good for a spot in a seven-man logjam for 39th. *Reuters*

Bayron 7 shots off despite 69

JAY BAYRON BOUNCED back with a three-under-par 69 but still stood seven strokes off Queensland's Andrew Dodt halfway through the Riversdale Cup in Melbourne, Australia, Saturday. Dodt, who followed up his opening 67 with a 69, shared the lead at 136 with Stewart Tim (66). Bayron was at 143 after a 74 Saturday. With Michael Bibat matching par 72 (146), the RP team stood 12 strokes off leader Queensland in the team event with 289. Anthony Fernando, who with Miko Alejandro composed the other ICTSI-backed RP squad, also fired a three-under 69 while Alejandro shot a 71 for 140 and a 297 total.

SPORTS

New prayers for Philippine basketball

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

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* * *

Unfortunately, there's always the greater danger of faith failing out there.

For example, the latest poll surveys show people's faith in the current regime continues to erode.

There is, based on the surveys, a clamor and cry for change.

So expect a lot of manipulations, not to mention shameless threats and arrests, in a bid to make things look good for the beleaguered government.

* * *

At least, this is not the case for Philippine sports, particularly basketball.

After the international basketball federation (Fiba) lifted its suspension on RP basketball, there's the all-out move to put up a strong national team.

There's the frantic haste to reenter the mainstream with the hope of playing again in the Olympics.

But, come to think of it, aren't the prime movers behind the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas overlooking the essentials of rebuilding?

* * *

Sorry, but this question had to be asked following the receipt of this message from Bacolod:

"SILENCE. After the Fiba recognition and the national team formation, *wala na*. Nothing follows. We are in the dark, so are other regions regarding basketball plans and programs."

Touche. **Pardon this, but that was the honest truth.**

Anyway, before we could fully wonder who the anonymous texter was, the cellphone beeped again: "Thnx, regards. Rudy Azcona, Bacolod."

* * *

Well, it's not that late actually.

In fact, after sending that urgent message to a concerned supporter of the new national basketball body, we got this reply:

"Now, *kasi, wala pang* ED (executive director) who should've sent the Fiba communication to the provinces. *Dapat* they should hold the national students championship, to give provincial teams a chance to participate."

One concerned party said SBP bigwigs were scheduled for a planning meet in Tagaytay.

There was nothing specific.

Naturally, the message was lost in the communications jungle.

One reason some RP basketball devotees have started to lose faith.

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Brilliant Baguio

Pine City athletes rule Olympic Festival

By June Navarro

VIGAN, ILOCOS SUR—BAGUIO CITY came out empty-handed in aquatics but delivered the decisive medals in taekwondo to rule the Central-Northern Luzon qualifying games of the 2nd Philippine Olympic Festival.

Victories in taekwondo yesterday provided ample breathing space for the Pine City bets as they clinched the overall title despite a final-day onslaught by La Union and Pangasinan in the pool.

Baguio struck for 13 gold medals in the combat sport, sustaining its triumphs in arnis, judo, muay thai and archery, to cap the week-long hostilities with 80 gold, 68 silver and 71 bronze medals.

Swimming produced multiple gold medalists in 13-year-old Jessie Khing Lacuna of Bulacan and La Union's Paula Isabel Ordoño, who both eclipsed the six-gold haul of Baguio's Anna Melissa de Leon in arnis.

Lacuna, who hails from Pulilan, swept the gold medals in 13 events, ruling the 100-meter freestyle, 100m backstroke, 400m individual medley, 1,500m free and 200m IM in the boys' 13-14 division.

The Bulacan State University high school freshman also topped the 50m free, 200m back, 100m breast, 200m breast, 200m butterfly, 200m free, 100m fly and 400m free in his age group.

"I'm tired but happy because this is the first time I won so many medals in one meet," said Lacuna in Filipino.

Ordoño posted nine victories—in the 100m free, 100m back, 400m IM, 200m IM, 50m free, 100m breast, 200m back, 200m free and 200m breast.

"I hope to swim well, too, in the Palaro," said Ordoño, 12, from St. Louis College in San Fernando, La Union.

Welterweight jin Mark Aldrin Rico and middleweight Dennis Pizzaro triumphed for Baguio in the senior division while Jessica Arellano stamped her class in the junior women's middleweight class.

Daniel Kevin, Ivan Nino Tindoc and Benjamine Keith Sembrano proved superior in grade school while Phillene Tumbaga, Devorah Alacar and Apriel Solimen shone in the girls' bracket.

Other taekwondo jins who sparkled for Baguio were featherweight Fernand Delizo and welterweight Francis Bambico in the mid-junior class and finweight Patricia Delizo and bantam Iyra Tindoc in the women's mid-junior group.

"We never really expected to perform well because most of our athletes are tired," said Baguio City mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr. of his charges who also vied in a regional meet two weeks ago.

2ND PHIL OLYMPIC FESTIVAL

MEDALS	G	S	B
Baguio	80	68	71
Pangasinan	56	36	45
La Union	39	42	39
Bulacan	37	25	15
Nueva Ecija	32	22	25
Zambales	24	34	24
Ilocos Norte	20	18	25
Angeles	16	13	17
Ilocos Sur	10	17	32
Benguet	10	13	26
Cagayan	9	17	21
Ifugao	8	6	3
Isabela	0	2	4
Abra	0	1	1
Nueva Viscaya	0	0	1
Tarlac	0	0	1
Olongapo City	0	0	1

INQGRAPHICS: LOUIE BACANI

LA UNION'S Kristopher Witt churns his way to the 100-meter breaststroke gold. RYAN LIM

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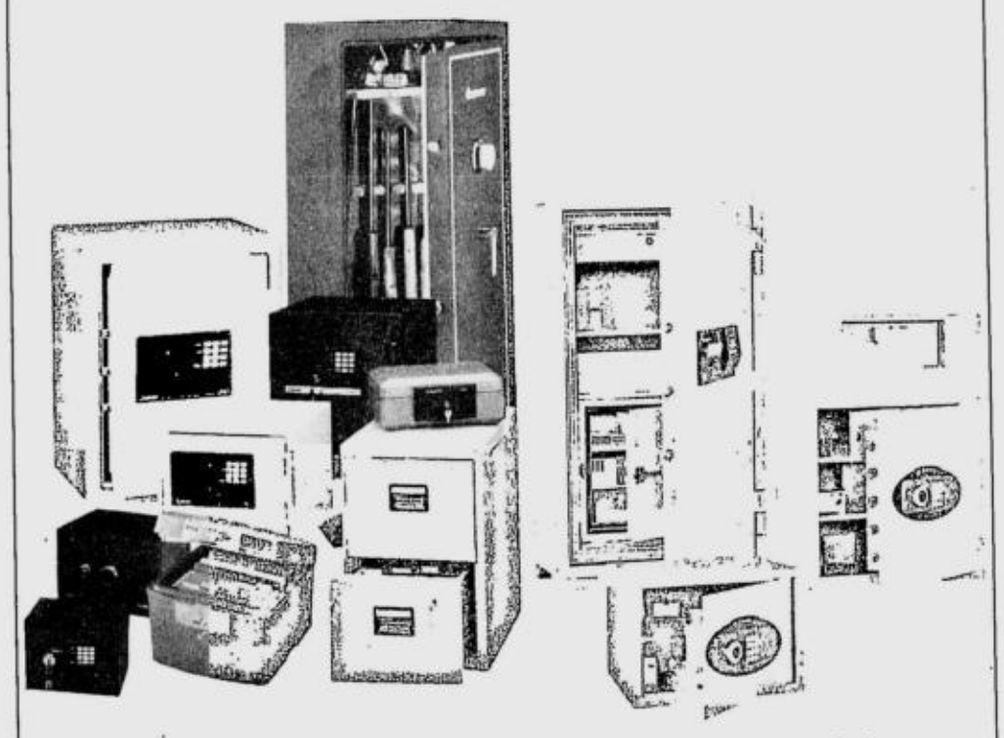

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0406 Series of 2007

Ford Nat'l Team Shootout tees off

FOUR OF 27 MEMBERS OF THE FEDeration of Golf Clubs Inc. (FedGolf) kicked off club-level tournaments on Saturday for the right to advance to next month's regional satellite competition in the 2007 Ford National Team Shootout.

Firing off the competitions were Sta. Elena Golf and Country Club, Manila Golf Club, Negros Occidental Golf and Country Club, and Iloilo Golf and Country Club.

The three-month long tournament officially opened on March 7 when representatives from Ford Group Philippines, FedGolf and Golf Digest Phils. Magazine, the country's most comprehensive golf magazine published by Hinge Inquirer Publications, signed the agreement for the holding of this year's event.

Club-level tournaments will also be held at Alta Vista from today to Wednesday; Mimosa on March 16; Royal Northwoods, The Orchard and Mt. Malarayat on March 17; The Orchard and Camp John Hay on March 18; Cebu Country Club on March 20; Alabang Country Club, Riviera, Sherwood Hills, Forest Hills, Pueblo de Oro and Canlubang on March 24; Manila Southwoods and Splendido on March 25; Eastridge on March 28; Valley, Splendido, Tagaytay Highlands and Tagaytay Midlands on March 31; Eagle Ridge on April 1; and Wack Wack on April 12.

Tournaments at Ayala Greenfields and Baguio Country Club will also be arranged.

Winners in the club-level stage will advance to the regional satellites in April and May. Topnotchers in regional satellites will compete in the grand finals slated May 31 at Tagaytay Highlands and on June 1 at Tagaytay Midlands.

FORE!: From left, Hinge Inquirer Publications SVP and GM Paul Vincent Bermudez, HIP president David O. Valdes, Ford AVP Glen Dasig, FedGolf auditor Porfirio M. Flores, and FedGolf corporate secretary Teofilo C. Abejo III link hands after signing the agreement.

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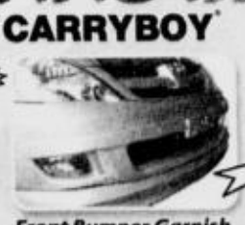
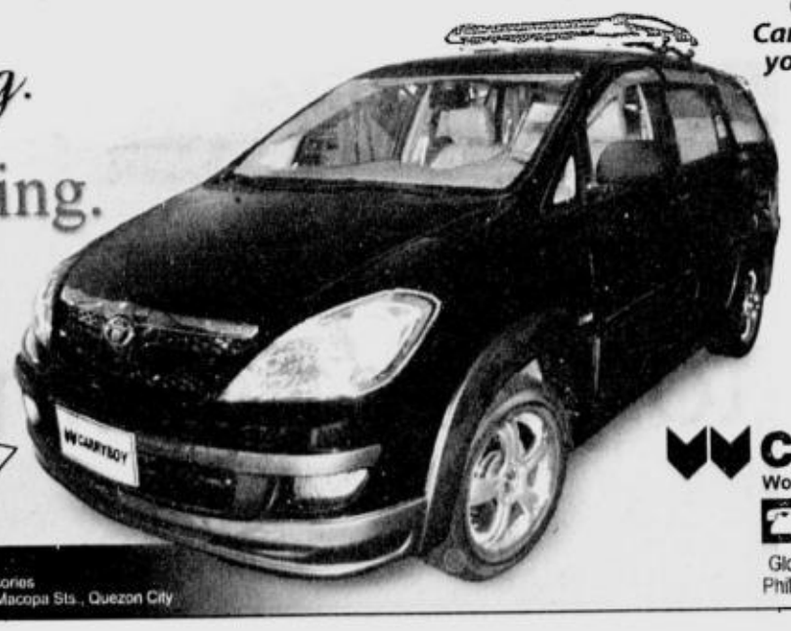


Front Bumper Garnish



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Peñalosa spars 12 rounds, ready for WBO champion

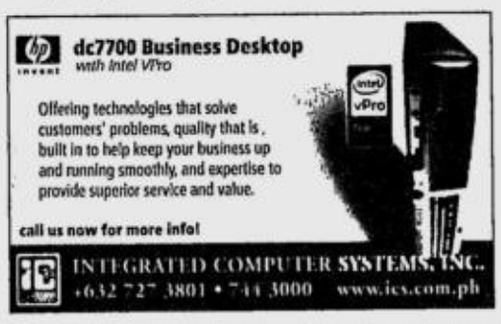
FORMER WBC SUPERFLYweight champ Gerry Peñalosa sparred for 12 rounds against Mexicans Saturday, then declared himself in perfect shape for his title fight with WBO superbantam king Daniel Ponce De Leon.

The grueling session was Peñalosa's last before he motors to Las Vegas on Monday for the fight. He will be joined in the six-hour land trip to Nevada by Diosdado Gabi, who is seeing action in an eight-round rumble with Colombian Giovanni Andrade.

Peñalosa and Gabi are in the undercard of the Marco Antonio Barrera-Juan Manuel Marquez WBC superfeatherweight duel dubbed "Fearless."

Supervising yesterday's sparring sessions at the Wild Card Gym were Justin Fortune and Macka Foley, who are overseeing the Filipinos' preparations in the absence of celebrated trainer Freddie Roach, who is in Puerto Rico training Oscar De La Hoya.

Roach, though, will be at the corner of both Peñalosa and Gabi, two fighters he also manages. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*



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SM unveils mammoth tourism project

Batangas property twice the size of Macau

By Daxim L. Lucas

SM INVESTMENTS CORP. (SMIC), the holding firm of mall tycoon Henry Sy Sr., has entered the booming tourism business with a massive real estate development aimed at what the firm says is a "$2-billion sunrise industry."

The listed firm said it would formally launch next week its Hamilo Coast project in Batangas province, which it described as a "one of a kind development."

"This pioneering effort will combine two independently sustainable

SM UNVEILS/ B2

INDICATORS

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As of 5 p.m., March 8, 2007

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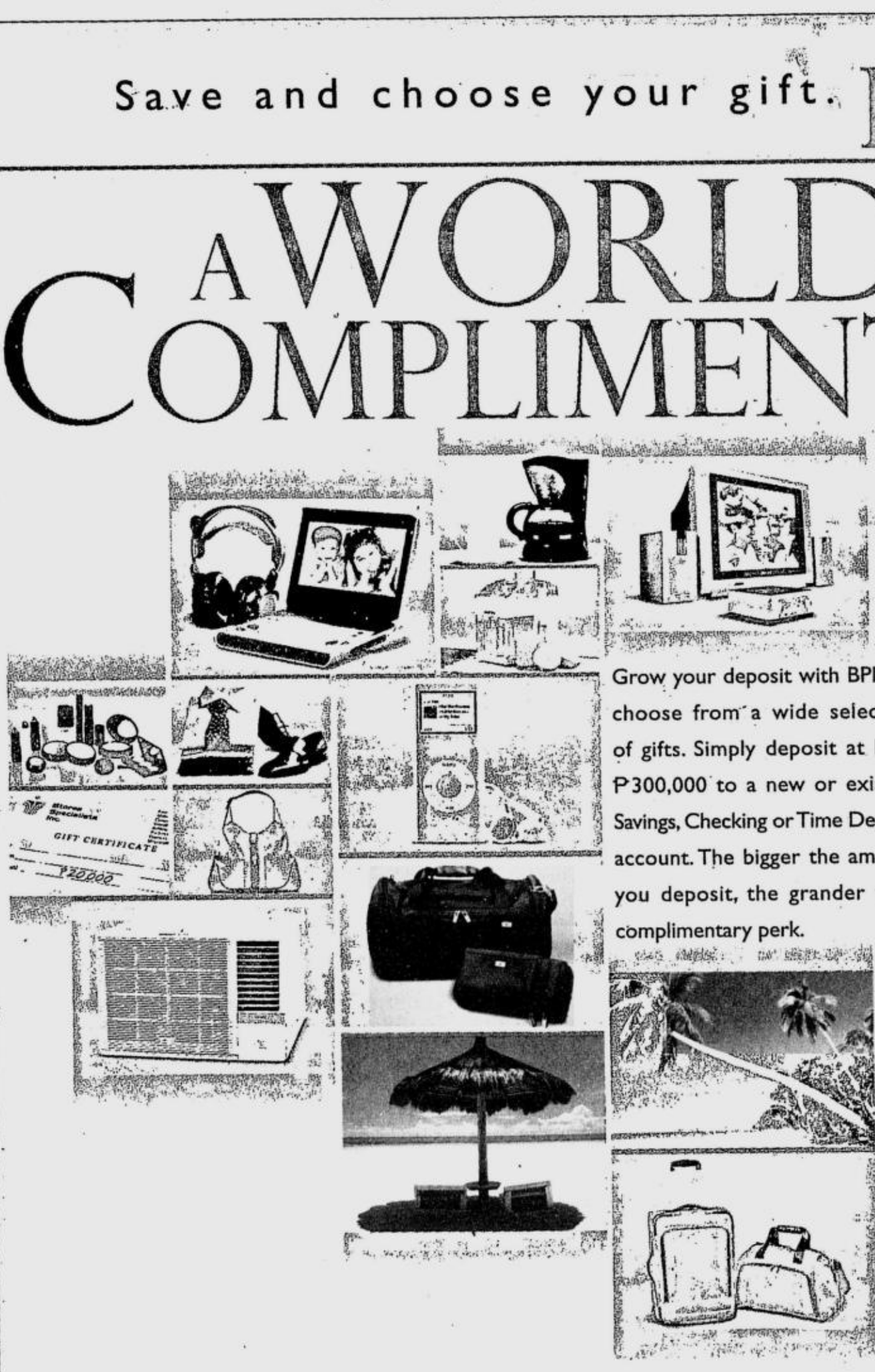

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(as of March 7, 2007)

Investment Funds	Fund Classification	Net Yield: Past 90 Days*	Year On Year	Full Year 2006
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Metrofund Starter	Money Market	1.18%	8.61%	10.80%
Metrofund Elite	Bond-Intermediate Term	1.55%	10.16%	13.70%
Metrofund Peak Earner	Bond-Medium Term	1.43%	9.99%	13.74%
Metro Invest Plus	Bond-Intermediate Term	1.43%	9.91%	12.69%
Metro Capital Growth Fund	Balanced Fund	7.86%	36.34%	41.24%
DOLLAR FUNDS				
Metrodollar Phil. Liquid Fund	Bond-Intermediate Term	0.76%	6.30%	7.06%
Metrodollar Phil. Bond Fund	Bond-Medium Term	0.67%	8.33%	9.69%
Metro Dollar Asian Bond Fund	Bond-Medium Term	1.15%	5.68%	4.27%

* Absolute Yield
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"Participation in the Fund is not a deposit and not covered by PDIC. The fund is not capital protected and any income/loss arising from market fluctuations is for the account of the investor. Historical performance is not a guarantee of similar future results."

Karaoke economics

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

AMBASSADOR RYU YAMAZAKI OF JAPAN has done it again. For the last three annual sessions of the Philippine Development Forum (still known to oldtimers as the annual donor pledging session, though it's much more than that now), he has provided humor and wit to liven up the otherwise staid and formal proceedings.

This year's session was held in the city of Cebu, a welcome opportunity for most participants to see for themselves what the city had to offer to the delegates to the recent Asean meetings—including the infamous P200,000 lampposts of recent reports. Business from the several hundred delegates to the PDF must have helped somewhat to compensate the hotels for the supposed losses incurred from the postponement of the Asean Summit meeting last December.

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Empty orchestra

Absent from this year's proceedings were the economist jokes that Ambassador Yamazaki and others had spiced up the discussions with in the last two sessions in Tagaytay City and Davao City (featured in this column in NFL, April 3, 2006).

But the good ambassador was not about to disappoint. To cap his substantive contributions to the PDF deliberations, he left the group with a rather apt analogy describing what the PDF was all about. The analogy was built around the karaoke, which he said could very well be the most popular Japanese word in the world today. The word "kara," he explained, meant "empty" in Japanese. "Karate," for example, gets it meaning from "kara" and "te" (hand)—implying empty-handed or unarmed combat. "Oke" is a diminutive for the Japanese word for "orchestra." Thus, karaoke derives its name, literally, from "empty orchestra," or orchestra music without the song or vocals.

And that, he declared, was what the PDF was all about. The donors are there to provide the background music of the orchestra via their resource support, but it is still up for the country, especially the government, to provide the song.

More songs

In last week's PDF discussions, the donors pointed out that there remain many songs to be sung.

All welcomed the considerable progress made on the fiscal front, particularly in achieving a much-smaller-than-planned national government deficit last year. But even as the donors welcomed the long-awaited reversal of the continuous slide in tax effort (translation: ratio of tax revenues to GDP) since 1997, some concern was expressed that the improved fiscal balance was also attained through expenditure compression.

The compression in expenditures was largely the effect of non-passage of the 2006 budget—a "blessing in disguise," as Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. termed it. Nonetheless, it is to be noted that even based on the proposed budgets submitted by the Executive branch to Congress, the allocated share of education, for example, had dropped continuously from almost 20 percent in 1997 to less than 14 percent in 2006. Like the slide in the tax effort, this has finally been reversed, with the 2007 budget providing about 14.4 percent to education.

Scope for more

While the above speaks of the need and scope for more public investments, the generally low level of investments especially from the private sector was a concern voiced out by the World Bank and other participants. Interestingly, the investment ratio (i.e. to GDP) had fallen since 2000, despite rising fiscal incentives through the same period. The World Bank also pointed out that contrary to common claims, our corporate income tax is relatively low compared to our neighbors. There is clearly so much more singing we need to do to spur investment.

The Department of Finance unveiled a program to boost tax effort by at least 3 more percentage points, thereby bringing it back to levels already attained in the 1990s. The good news is that most of the targeted 3 percentage points will be pursued through improved tax administration, rather than new tax measures. The main tax measures to be pushed in the 14th Congress will be limited to the rationalization of fiscal incentives—to save around P40 billion estimated to be lost annually to redundant incentives—and a restructuring of the income tax to enhance tax compliance.

Repertoire

The PDF discussions pointed out the great scope for further improving collection efficiency. For example, there is wide discrepancy between the number of new motor vehicles registered by the Land Transportation Office (LTO) every year, and the number of newly manufactured and officially imported vehicles reported. Much tax evasion can be curbed by using information that can be shared more freely among government agencies (e.g. LTO, SEC, BIR and LGUs). Rep. Herminio Teves suggested amending the COA charter to give the constitutional body the authority to audit not only expenditures, but government revenue collections as well. In the end, the group agreed that there are so many more songs that can be sung to improve tax collection efficiency. Both BIR and Customs have lined up their respective repertoire on this for the years ahead.

By all means, let's give them all the *salabat* they need to sing their songs well!

Comments are welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

SM unveils ...

From page B1

industries—ecotourism and real estate—to create a groundbreaking developmental force with the potential to put local ecotourism on the global radar [screen] and propel the country forward," the firm said.

In a separate interview, SMIC vice president for investor relations Corazon Guidote said the project would dwarf the Punta Fuego residential resort development, which sits adjacent to the SM property in Nasugbu, Batangas.

"Punta Fuego is 80 hectares," she said. "Hamilo Coast will have a total of 5,800 hectares."

Earlier company statements said that the SM group would initially spend P2 billion for the development.

Guidote said the entire project would be "twice the size of Macau," referring to the Chinese special administrative region that is also a gambling and tourist enclave.

"We think there's a huge potential in the tourism industry," Guidote added.

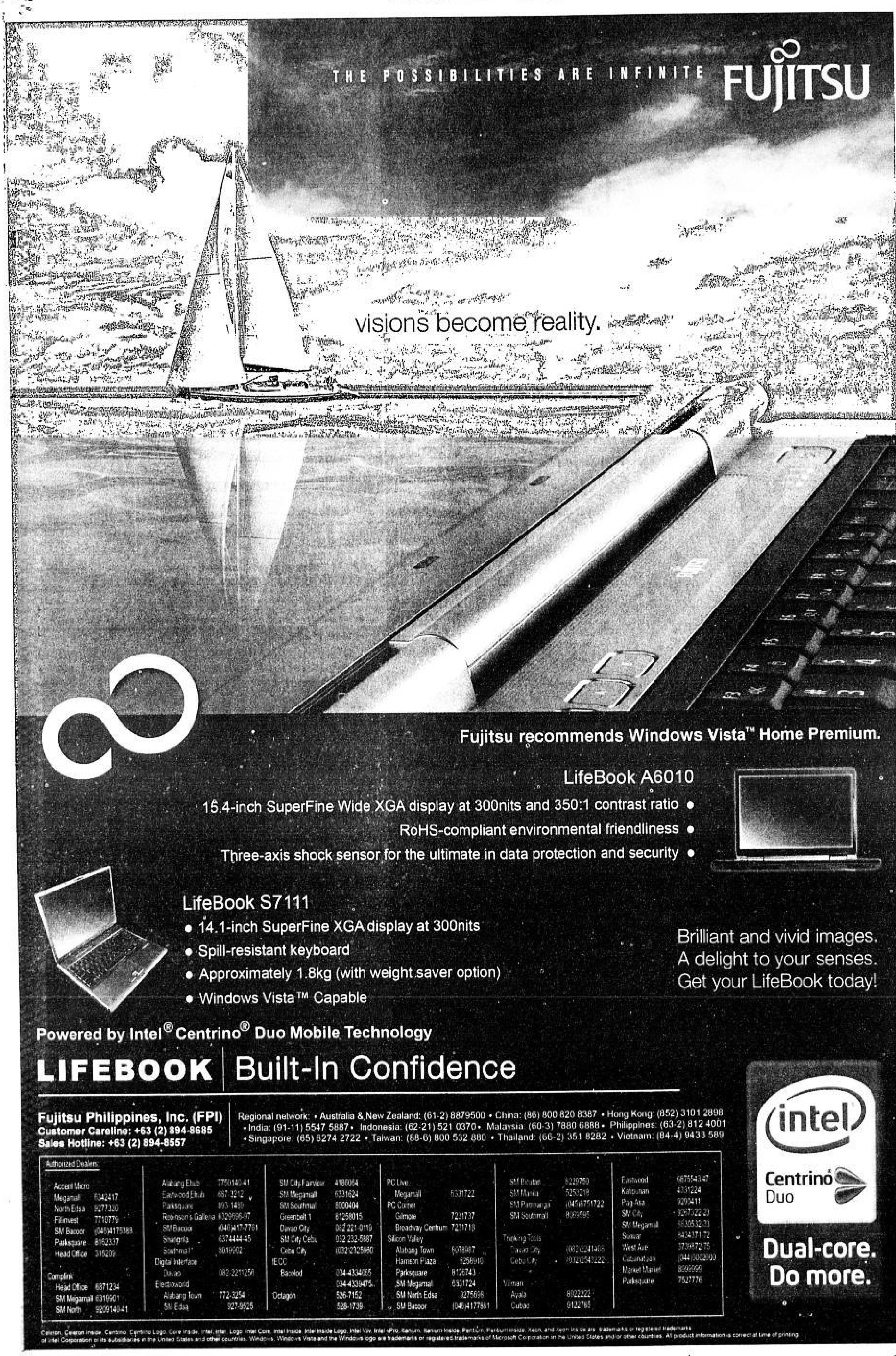
The SMIC official said that Hamilo Coast would be launched in phases, with the first phase to be unveiled to the public on March 22.

She added that the project would be a mixed-use complex with residential, resort hotel, and retail components.

Other details of the project, like the company's partners and their target market, would be disclosed during the official launch, Guidote said.

The company recently said that it has allotted a total of P20 billion this year for capital expenditures on various projects. It recently borrowed $300 million from foreign and local creditors through five-year convertible bonds to fund its expansion plans.

On the Philippine Stock Exchange, shares of SMIC ended Friday at P350 a share, unchanged from the previous day's level. Trading was heavy with P241.7 million worth of shares changing hands.



Chemrez to sell carbon credits

By Abigail L. Ho

COCO-BIODIESEL producer Chemrez Technologies Inc. stands to earn some $3.5 million from the sale of at least 500,000 tons in carbon credits from this year to 2013.

ChemrezTech chief finance officer Francis Caluag said the company had signed an agreement with Natsource Asset Management Corp. covering the sale of carbon credits that would result from the sale of its BioActiv coco-biodiesel product.

Carbon credits, based on how much carbon dioxide emission will be saved from the use of renewable energy, now sell for around $7 a ton in the world market.

Under the Kyoto Protocol, of which the Philippines is one of the 163 signatories, firms that invest in renewable energy will earn carbon credits that can be traded for funds.

Caluag said the estimated 500,000 tons in carbon credits was based on a "conservative" estimated consumption of 30,000 tons of coco-biodiesel.

He said ChemrezTech could eventually seek carbon credits for the use of its coco-biodiesel product by non-automotive engines, such as ships and power plants.

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L.A. 248sqm (near Cypress Subd.)
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L.A. 347sqm (Near Budget Land)
Sto. Nino St. Cor. Ascension St., MILAGROS SUBD.
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SPR_RZL323 RSDL LOT
GREENRIDGE SUBD.
Brgy. Bilibiran (Near Brgy. Hall)
Lot Area / Min. Bid Price
54sqm P 115,000
55sqm P 119,000
57sqm P 122,000
61sqm P 130,000
64sqm P 136,000

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SPR_RZL329 HOUSE & LOT
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Lot 32 & 34 Blk 12 No.1116 Sparrow Eagle St., DON MARIANO SUBD.
San Isidro (Near Brookeside)
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VALLEY VIEW EXEC. SUBD.
Min. Bid Price: P 1,802,000

SPR_RZL331 3-STRY HSE & LOT
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Villena St. (Near Sta. Lucia)
VISTA VERDE EXEC. VILL.
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SPR_RZL332 RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,088sqm (Near Meralco)
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SPR_RZL333 RSDL LOT
L.A. 238sqm
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Valley Golf (Near Golf Course)
Min. Bid Price: P 709,000

SPR_RZL335 RSDL VACANT LOT
BIRMINGHAM PLACE
Brookeside Hills (near Meralco)
Lot Area / Min. Bid Price
182sqm P 482,000
186sqm P 494,000

SPR_RZL336 RSDL LOT
L.A. 278sqm (Near F.Invest Subd)
EASTVILLE SUBD., Filinvest East
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SPR_RZL337 2-STRY HSE & LOT
L.A. 200sqm F.A. 384sqm
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SPR_CAL361 HOUSE & LOT
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Antipolo St. cor. Pasig St., MAYPAJO (Near Ma. Auxeleadores Church)
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SPR_CAL363 RSDL LOT
L.A. 3,401sqm
Ph-3 & 4 TIERRA NOVA ROYAL, Bagumbong (Near Ma. Theresa Avila School)
Lot Area / Min Bid Price
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SPR_CAL365 4-DR APRTMENT
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SPR_CAL368 RSDL VACANT LOT
L.A. 146sqm (Near Christian Chapel)
No.583 AQUINO St., Between 2nd & 3rd Ave.
Min Bid Price: P 484,000

SPR_CAL369 RSDL LOT
L.A. 412sqm
Lot 21 Blk 12 MIRA MONTE HTS SUBD., Novaliches
Min Bid Price: P 421,000

SPR_CAL370 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 146sqm F.A 125.40sqm
No.583 SAN DIEGO COMP. Llano Rd. Brgy. Llano
(Near St. Adrew School)
Min Bid Price: 815,000

SPR_CAL371 RSDL LOT
L.A. 240sqm
Guijo St. SILANGAN SUBD.
Deparo (Near Brgy. Hall)
Min Bid Price: P 572,000

SPR_CAL372 RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,279sqm
F. Llano St. DAMONG MALIIT
Novaliches (Near Ina ng Bayan Church)
Min Bid Price: P 2,175,000

SPR_CAL373 2-STRY HSE & LOT
L.A. 249sqm F.A. 320sqm
Golden Clarion St (Near City Hall)
LILLES VILLE Subd. Ph2, Camarin
Min Bid Price: P 2,550,000

SPR_CAL374 RSDL VACANT LOT
VISTA VERDE NORTH Ph-3, Kaybiga
Lot Area / Min Bid Price
144sqm P 392,000
156sqm P 425,000
316sqm P 860,000
320sqm P 923,000
248sqm P 2,650,000

SPR_CAL409 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 311sqm FA 54sqm
(Near St. Andrew)
Lot 2 Blk 2 Llano Rd, SAN DIEGO COMP Brgy. Llano.
Min Bid Price: P 582,000

SPR_CAL410 RSDL LOT
L.A. 197sqm
Munich St. (Near Vista Verde North)
VISTA VERDE EXEC VILL, Kaybiga
Min Bid Price: P 587,000

LAS PIÑAS

SPR_LSP412 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 169sqm F.A. 95sqm
Lot-5-A No.32 Piña St.
VERDANT ACRES SUBD.
Pamplona (Near Starmall 2)
Min Bid Price: P 983,000

SPR_LSP413 RSDL LOT
L.A. 160sqm
QUIRINO Ave cor. C-5 Rd Ext
Pulang Lupa 1 (Near SM- Sucat)
Min Bid Price: P 28,161,000

SPR_LSP414 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 350sqm F.A. 247.56sqm
Tropical Ave. (Near Macro)
BF HOMES INTERNATIONAL
Min Bid Price: P3,818,000

SPR_LSP416 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 192sqm
Recio Garcia St. (Near Makro)
BF RESORT VILL, Pamplona
Min Bid Price: P1,280,000

SPR_LSP417 2-STRY HSE & LOT
L.A. 260sqm F.A. 250sqm
(Near SM Sucat)
Camia cor Villanueva St.
GATCHALIAN SUBD. Ph-VII
Min Bid Price: P 1,726,000

SPR_LSP418 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 497sqm F.A. 385sqm
Lozada St., (Near SM Sucat)
GATCHALIAN SUBD, Manuyo
Min Bid Price: P3,044,000

SPR_LSP419 2-DR APRTMENT
L.A. 582sqm F.A. 306 sqm.
Ines Monapol cor. Guada Sanchez
BF RESORT VILL. (Near Makro)
Min Bid Price: P5,343,000

SPR_LSP420 4-STRY COMML BLDG
L.A. 136sqm F.A. 399.71sqm
Real St. (Alabang Zapote Rd) Pamplona
Min Bid Price: P5,014,000

MAKATI

SPR_MKT421 OFFICE CONDO
F.A. 148sqm
VERNIDA I CONDO, Amorsolo St
Min Bid Price: P 5,661,000

SPR_MKT422 RSDL CONDO
F.A 35.60sqm (near AMA College)
SOUTH STAR PLAZA, South Super Hi-way
Min Bid Price: P 756,000

SPR_MKT432 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 287sqm F.A 78sqm
(Near Loyola Chapel)
Lot 12-B PROGRESSO I, Guadalupe Viejo
Min Bid Price: P 3,134,000

SPR_MKT428 RSDL CONDO w/PRKG
F.A. 107sqm
(Near Makati Sport Complex)
THE PEAK CONDO
Alfaro cor. Herrera Sts.
Min Bid Price: P 5,912,000

SPR_MKT429 OFFICE CONDO
BURGUNDY CONDO, Gil Puyat
(Near Crispa & Makati Medical)
Floor Area / Min Bid Price
45.30sqm P 3,193,000
66.30sqm P 4,679,000

SPR_MKT433 RSDL CONDO
F.A 233sqm w/PRKG
LPL MANOR, Alfaro St.
SALCEDO VILL. (Near Makati Sport Complex)
Min Bid Price: P 12,260,000

SPR_MKT434 RSDL CONDO
PALACE OF MAKATI, P Burgos St.
(Near Makati Citadel)
Floor Area / Min Bid Price
32.60sqm P 1,526,000
66sqm P 3,087,000

SPR_MKT430 RSDL CONDO
F.A. 150sqm w/ PRKG
LPL MANOR Alfaro St.
SALCEDO VILL. (Near Makati Sport Complex)
Min Bid Price: P 7,905,000

SPR_MKT437 RDSL/INDUST HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 296sqm F.A. 200sqm
Buez St. Sta. Cruz
(Near Ecoville Townhomes)
near METROPOLITAN AVE
Min Bid Price: P 7,717,000

SPR_MKT439 RSDL CONDO
T-TOWER CONDO (Near Bel Air)
P. Burgos cor. Calderon St.
Floor Area / Min Bid Price
30sqm P 969,000
583sqm P19,822,000

SPR_MKT441 COMML LOT
L.A 304sqm
#5107 Malolos Bgy. TEJEROS, Makati City
Min Bid Price: P 4,383,000

MANILA

SPR_MNL442 RSDL CONDO
GOTESCO REGENCY TWIN TOWERS, Concepcion St.
(Near SM Manila)
Floor Area / Min Bid Price
194.60sqm P 6,824,000
196.56sqm P 6,884,000
197.28sqm P 6,708,000

SPR_MNL443 PENTHSE CONDO
GOTESCO REGENCY TWIN TOWERS Concepcion St.
(Near SM Manila)
Floor Area / Min Bid Price
369.18sqm P 12,553,000
372.78sqm P 12,675,000
373.38sqm P 12,695,000

SPR_MNL448 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 826.50sqm F.A. 178sqm
1185 CRISTOBAL cor. Pulilang Kauyan St. Paco (Near NFA Ofc)
Min Bid Price: P 12,455,000

SPR_MNL451 RSDL LOT
L.A. 154.20sqm (Near St. Jude Church)
Int. Uli-Uli St. SAN MIGUEL
Min Bid Price: P 1,377,000

SPR_MNL452-STRY RSDL BLDG
L.A. 209sqm F.A. 206sqm
(Near Carreon & Pedro Gil)
#2020 DELAS ALAS St. Sta. Ana
Min Bid Price: P 2,147,000

SPR_MNL457 3-STRY RSDL BLDG
L.A. 86sqm F.A. 250sqm
(Near Solis St)
DAGUPAN St. Ext, Tondo
Min Bid Price: P 1,372,000

SPR_MNL458 7 STUDIO UNITS
L.A. 93.40sqm F.A. 275sqm
#2004 G. PERFECTO St. Tondo
(Near PureGold)
Min Bid Price: P 2,170,000

SPR_MNL459 OLD HSE & LOT
L.A. 396sqm F.A. 236sqm
(Near Manuguid Market)
No.3133 B-Abucay St., MANUGUID, Tondo.
Min Bid Price: P3,142,000

SPR_MNL460 2-STRY HSE & LOT
L.A 1,075sqm F.A. 350sqm
No.3173 Pilar St. MANUGUIT, Tondo (Near Manuguid Market)
Min Bid Price: P 10,965,000

MARIKINA

SPR_MRK463 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 300sqm F.A. 300sqm
(Near Sta. Lucia)
26 Dasdasan St. MIDTOWN SUBD.
Min Bid Price: P 7,287,000

SPR_MRK464 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 157sqm F.A.157sqm
Lot38-A #85 H. Bautista St.
(Near H. Bautista School)
CONCEPCION UNO.
Min Bid Price: P 822,000

SPR_MRK466 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 389sqm. F.A. (Near Panorama)
Lot 43 Blk 5 #8 Summit St.
NORTH RIM VIEW PARK.
Min Bid Price: P 1,417,000

SPR_MRK467 HOUSE & LOT
L.A 120sqm F.A 65sqm
LA JOTA VILLA 1 (Near Jollibee)
Gen. Ordonez St., Concepcion Uno
Min Bid Price: P 892,000

SPR_MRK468 VACANT LOT
L.A. 248sqm (Near China Bank)
J.P RIZAL St. San Roque
Min Bid Price: 2,108,000

MONTALBAN, RIZAL

SPR_RZL341 FARM LOT
ADIA, Montalban
(Near San Jose Market)
Lot Area / Min. Bid Price
240sqm P 111,000
3,681sqm P 1,692,000

SPR_343 RSDL LOT
L.A. 5,314sqm (Near Brgy. Hall)
Lot 2666 Sitio Adja, BRGY. MANGGAHAN
Min. Bid Price: P 24,204,000

SPR_RZL344 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 388sqm. F.A. 126sqm
(Near Montana Subd.)
79 A. Mabini Int. St. BURGOS
Min. Bid Price: P 1,252,000

SPR_RZL345 INDSL LOT
L.A. 11,988sqm
Lot 209 DAO ST.
(Near Municipal Hall)
Min. Bid Price: P 4,833,000

MUNTINLUPA

SPR_MUN471 HSE & LOT w/ BSMNT
L.A. 1,221sqm F.A 1,092sqm
(Near City Hall & Alabang Business)
Regent St. and Peninsula St.
PLEASANT VILLAGE
Min Bid Price: P 7,605,000

NAVOTAS

SPR_NVT472 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 100sqm F.A. 168sqm
No 620 M. NAVAL St.
(Near Iglesia Cristo)
Bagumbayan South
Min Bid Price: P 1,128,000

PARAÑAQUE

SPR_PRQ473 HOUSE & LOT
L.A 300sqm F.A.140sqm
118 Amethy St.
GREENHEIGHTS SUBD.
Min Bid Price: P 2,191,000

SPR_PRQ474 TOWN HOUSE
WESTMONT VILLAGE w/ PRKG
Dr. A. Santos Ave (Near City Hall)
Floor Area / Min Bid Price
82.25sqm P 1,408,000
118.75sqm P 2,260,000

PASAY

SPR_PSY477 2RSDL BLDG
L.A. 674sqm F.A 245sqm & 400sqm
P. ZAMORA St. (Near MRT Station)
Min Bid Price: P 8,413,000

PASIG

SPR_PSG478 OFFICE CONDO
ONE MAGNIFICENT MILE CONDO.
San Miguel Ave. (Near Mega Mall & EDSA Shangrila Mall)
Floor Area / Min Bid Price
80.72sqm P 3,680,000
100.60sqm P 4,530,000

PATEROS

SPR_PAT480 FACTORY BLDG
L.A. 2,397.20 F.A. 2,182sqm
M. ALMEDA ST. Heritage Park
(Near Commercial Area)
Min Bid Price: P 18,127,000

PILILIA, RIZAL

SPR_RZL346 FARM LAND
MOTHER'S FARM
Bagong Bayan, San Isidro
Lot Area / Min Bid Price
5,507sqm P 1,898,000
5,834sqm P 1,984,000
11,429sqm P 3,886,000

QUEZON CITY

SPR_QCB481 RSDL LOT
L.A. 232sqm (Near AMA Computer School)
St. Andrew St. GSIS VILL. Baesa
Min Bid Price: 1,578,000

SPR_QCL482 UNFINISHED BLDG
L.A. 1,843sqm
(Near Broadway Centrum)
AURORA BLVD cor. Madison St.
Min Bid Price: P 48,880,000

SPR_QCB483 RSDL LOT
L.A. 178sqm
Riverdale St. (Near FEU Hosp.)
GREENVIEW EXEC VILL.
Min Bid Price: P 833,000

SPR_QCL484 RSDL CONDO
F.A. 30.00sqm
XAVIERVILLE ROYALE CONDO.
Loyola Hghts. (Near Ateneo & Katipunan Ave)
Min Bid Price: P 1,320,000

SPR_QCB488 HOUSE & LOT w/ BASEMENT
L.A 481sqm F.A. 243.38sqm
No.16 Malapat St., Diliman
(Near UP Diliman)
Min Bid Price: P 8,642,000

SPR_QCB487 RSDL LOT
L.A. 821sqm
(Near EVER GOTESCO)
Victorino Salazar St.
Brgy. Holy Spirit, BF HOMES
Min Bid Price: P 4,761,000

SPR_QCB488 VACANT LOT
L.A 1,407sqm (Near Villa Vill)
Quirino Highway, Brgy. Talipapa, NOVALICHES
Min Bid Price: P 19,087,000

SPR_QCB490 RSDL CONDO UNITS
MINDANAO AVE, Brgy. Bago Bantay
(Near Congressional Ave)
Floor Area / Min Bid Price
189.53sqm P 6,700,000
236.84sqm P 8,369,000
236.84sqm P 8,205,000
236.84sqm P 8,205,000

SPR_QCL495 - RSDL CONDO
F.A. 45 sqm. (2 Units Available)
PRINCE GREGORY CONDO
12th Ave. Cubao
(Near ALI Mall, SM & Gateway)
Min Bid Price: P 1,722,000 each unit

SPR_QCB496 RSDL LOT
L.A.200sqm
No.28 STA. MAXIMA ST.
Bgy. Gulod, Novaliches
Min Bid Price: P 425,000

SPR_QCB503 6-STRY COMML / OFFICE BLDG W/PRKG ALLEY
L.A. 2,205sqm FA. 4,480sqm
HOSLA CONDOMINIUM I
T. Morato (Near E. Rodriguez)
Min Bid Price: P 82,514,000

SPR_QCL504 2-STRY HSE & LOT W/ 4 DILAPIDATED APARTMENT UNITS
L.A. 300sqm F.A. 214sqm
MIAMI St., Cubao
(Near Gateway Mall)
Min Bid Price: P 6,338,000

SPR_QCL506 2-STRY RDSL BLDG w/ 6-UNIT APRT
L.A. 351sqm F.A. 500sqm
No.17 PRINCETON ST.Cubao
(Near Isetann & Gateway)
Min Bid Price: P 5,040,000

SPR_QCB507 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 400sqm F.A. 540sqm
No.23 Maamo St. (Near V. Luna)
SIKATUNA VILLAGE
Min Bid Price: P 6,229,000

SPR_QCB509 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 240sqm F.A. 324.7sqm
No.5 Road 5 PAG-ASA SUBD.
(Near Veterans Memorial Hospital)
Min Bid Price: P 2,577,000

QCB510 RSDL CONDO UNIT
WEST MANSION HOTEL, Zamboanga St.
(Near Visayas Ave & Quezon Ave)
Floor Area / Min Bid Price
12.50sqm P 170,000 (parking)
37.76sqm P 1,264,000
55.97sqm P 2,141,000

SPR_QCB513 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 270sqm F.A. 254.55sqm
No.15 Sunstone St.
(Near Batasan Hall)
Northview I, FILINVEST II
Min Bid Price: P 2,356,000

SPR_QCL514 TOWNHSE UNIT
L.A. 55.6sqm F.A. 109.60sqm
Lot 10 Blk 2 Unit C-9
MIRASOL TOWNHOUSE
Mirasol St., Cubao
(Near Gateway Mall)
Min Bid Price: P 1,194,000

SPR_QCB515 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 602.8sqm F.A. 640sqm
No.2 Makadios St., SIKATUNA VILLAGE (Near V. Luna)
Min Bid Price: P 8,360,000

SPR_QCB516 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 7,568sqm F.A. 350.01sqm
(Near SM Fairview)
No.45 VILLA LUZVIMINDA
Kaligayahan, Novaliches
Min Bid Price: P 23,468,000

SPR_QCB517 2-STRY HSE & LOT w/ ROOFDECK
L.A. 240sqm F.A. 216.5sqm
Gno St. (Near SM Fairview)
VILLA VERDE HOMES
Min Bid Price: P 2,363,000

SPR_QCB518 2-STRY HSE & LOT
L.A 452sqm F.A 602.60sqm
B8 L3 #9 Cirio St. ISIDORA HILLS
Min Bid Price: P 6,498,000

SPR_QCB520 2-UNITS TWNHOMES
L.A. 63.25sqm F.A. 193.20sqm
Unit 1&M REM TOWN HOMES
Marcelo St. San Isidro Hills
Min Bid Price: P 1,452,000

SPR_QCB521 RSDL LOT
Lot 798 -H-1-FCabildo St.
LACOR ROYALE, Old Balara
Lot Area / Min Bid Price
200sqm P 2,210,000
235sqm P 2,597,000

SPR_QCL523 2-STRY RSDL HOUSE & LOT
L.A 300sqm (Near Gateway & Ali Mall)
#40 11th Ave. Brgy. Socorro Cubao
Min Bid Price: P 4,456,000

SPR_QCL524 RSDL CONDO
F.A. 80sqm
UNION SQUARE ONE CONDO
15th Ave. (Near SM & ALI Mall)
Min Bid Price: P 2,040,000

SPR_QCB525 2-STRY OLD HSE
L.A. 450sqm F.A. 225sqm
(Near Sienna College)
Wayan St., MASAMBONG
Min Bid Price: P 6,057,000

SPR_QCB526 2-STRY BLDG w/ WAREHOUSE
L.A 711sqm. F.A. 1,065sqm
L9 B0 Ph2 Ninong Florentino St.
BF HOMES 2, Novaliches
Min Bid Price: P 8,901,000

SPR_QCL258 RSDL LOT
Palanan, CAPITOL DISTRICT
Lot Area / Min Bid Price
5,000sqm P 3,323,000
5,586sqm P 3,712,000
5,577sqm P 3,706,000
5,600sqm P 3,721,000

SPR_QCL533 2-STRY HSE & LOT
L.A. 489sqm F.A. 221sqm
WEST POINT ST., Cubao (Near SM)
Min Bid Price: P 7,113,000

SAN JUAN

SPR_SJ535 RSDL CONDO
F.A. 72.05sqm
(near Greenhills Shopping Ctr.)
PLATINUM 2000,Annapolis Greenhills
Min Bid Price: P 2,778,000

SAN MATEO, RIZAL

SPR_RZL349 COMML BLDG
L.A. 105sqm. F.A. 74sqm.
431 Gen. Luna St.
(Near San Mateo Chapel)
DULONG BAYAN
Min. Bid Price: P 1,521,000

SPR_RZL350 HOUSE & LOT w/ BUNGALOW
L.A. 1,405sqm FA sqm
(Near Ampid Market)
No. 20 DELOS ANGELES SUBD. AMPID - 1
Min. Bid Price: P 3,408,000

SPR_RZL351 HOUSE & LOT
L.A 307sqm. FA144sqm.
GUITNANG BAYAN
San Mateo (Beside RCBC Savings Bank)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,179,000

TAGUIG

SPR_TAG536 RSDL LOT
L.A. 277sqm (Near FTI)
Lot18 Blk 267 Quirino St.
SIGNAL VILLAGE
Min Bid Price: P 838,000

SPR_TAG537 RSDL LOT
L.A. 3,999sqm (Near City Hall)
JONES EXT., Pawang, Wawa
Min Bid Price: P 3,044,000

SPR_TAG538 RSDL LOT
L.A. 240sqm
(Near Fisher Valley College) & DMCI Nightingale Band,
BAY BREEZE, Wawa
Min Bid Price: P 812,000

TANAY, RIZAL

SPR_RZL 338 RSDL / FARM LOT
L.A. 1,600sqm.
Blk 2 Lot 2 Ph-III SACRAMENTO FARMS & VALLEY RESORT,
Sampaloc Tanay
Min. Bid Price: P 638,000

SPR_RZL339 RSDL LOT
L.A. 248sqm.
(Near Home Sweet Home Grocery)
Diamond St. PALMERA HOMES II
Min. Bid Price: P 572,000

SPR_RZL340 HOUSE & LOT w/ WAREHOUSE
L.A. 454sqm.
(Near Coca-cola Plant)
Macopa St. DIVIDEND HOMES
Min. Bid Price: P 1,314,000

VALENZUELA

SPR_VAL539 RSDL w/ IMPRVNT
L.A. 1490sqm F.A. 450sqm
MABOLO (Near Sapang San Roque)
Min Bid Price: P 6,736,000

SPR_VAL540 4 RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,277.50sqm
M. HERNANDEZ ST., Mabolo
(Near Sapang San Roque)
Min Bid Price: P 11,890,000

SPR_VAL543 HOUSE & LOT
L.A.500sqm F.A.290sqm
#37 Mainis St. LAWANG BATO
Min Bid Price: P 1,865,000

SPR_VAL545 WAREHOUSE
L.A. 1,234sqm F.A. 1,340sqm
(Near Regina Cycle Center)
KOWLOON COMPD.
Bo. Ugong, Mapulang Lupa
Min Bid Price: P 6,428,000

SPR_VAL546 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 200sqm F.A. 77.5sqm
(Central Corrugated Box Factory)
#26 S. Donesas St. CANUMAY WEST
Min Bid Price: P 933,000

LUZON

BAGUIO
Text 09185328111

SPR_BAG001 RSDL CONDO
FA 177.16sqm.
BAGUIO CLASSICS CONDO
Green Valley Subdivision
Min. Bid Price: P 3,765,000

BATAAN
Text 09266722888

SPR_BTN072 UNFINISHED SUBD.
LA. 72,684sqm.
(near Peninsula School)
Bo. Alangan Roman Super Hiway
Limay (Villa Haveland)
Min. Bid Price: P 27,671,000

BATANGAS
Text 09175443063

SPR_BAT655 LOFTY WAREHSE
L.A. 846sqm
(Near Padre Garcia Market)
Brgy. Pansol, PADRE GARCIA
Min. Bid Price: P 1,910,000

SPR_BAT222 AGRILOT
LA 4,687sqm.
(Near SM Lipa and Robinson)
BRGY. BALINTAWAK, Lipa City
Min. Bid Price: P 7,934,000

SPR_BAT223 RSDL LOT
MASAGANA SUBD., Tambo
Lipa City (Near La Salle & Robinson)
Lot Area / Min. Bid Price
105sqm P 498,000
842sqm P 1,432,000
(2 lots available)

BULACAN
Text 09273333733

SPR_BUL 073 2-STRY HSE & LOT
L.A. 250 sqm. F.A. 580 sqm
P Castro St., Burol 1, BALAGTAS BULACAN (near BALAGTAS MUNICIPAL HALL)
Min. Bid Price: P 5,343,000

SPR_BUL074 RSDL LOT
L.A. 99sqm. (2 lots avail)
3984 Wawa, BALAGTAS Bulacan
(Near Balagtas Municipal)
Min. Bid Price: P 421,000

SPR_BUL076 2 RSDL LOT
L.A. 689sqm
(Near Balagtas Municipal Hall)
BALAGTAS, Bulacan
Min Bid Price: P 1,582,000

SPR_BUL078 2-UNIT COMML BLDG
L.A. 134sqm F.A. 134 sqm.
(Near Municipal Hall)
321-A P. Castro St., Burol 1
BALAGTAS BULACAN
Min. Bid Price: P 721,000

SPR_BUL079 RSDL LOT
L.A. 6,709sqm
(Near Sabang Brgy. Hall)
Alley (Dr. Gonzales ext.)
Barangay Sabang, Baliuag
Min. Bid Price: P 4,848,000

SPR_BUL080 RESORT W/ COTTAGE & FISHPOND
L.A. 33,337sqm. F.A. 2,500 sqm.
(Near Bulacan Municipal Hall)
VILLA EVANGELISTA, Bagumbayan, Bulacan
Min. Bid Price: P 35,845,000

SPR_BUL091 RSDL LOT
LA160sqm. (Near Pulong Buhangin Brgy. Hall)
GREENBREEZE SUBD Sta. Maria
Min. Bid Price: P 230,000

SPR_BUL092 HOUSE & LOT
LA 748sqm. FA 63sqm.
No. 0913 Brgy. Silucso, Km.30
Pulong Buhangin Sta. Maria
Bulacan (Near Sta. Maria Cemetery)
Min. Bid Price: P 570,000

CAVITE
Text 09180046230

SPR_CVT254 RSDL LOT
Violeta St. ANDREA VILL.
Bacoor (Near SM Bacoor)
Lot Area / Min. Bid Price
278sqm P 828,000
270sqm P 831,000

SPR_CVT256 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 100.10sqm F.A. 90sqm
(Near SM Bacoor)
Lot 12 Blk 5
#272 Along Un named St.,
Palo Alto MALABANAN SUBD., Bacoor
Min. Bid Price: P 695,000

SPR_CVT258 RSDL LOT
LA 1,108sqm
(Golf Resort Village)
SOUTHWOODS, Kabilang Baybay, Carmona
Min. Bid Price: P 8,650,000

SPR_CVT259 RSDL LOT
L.A. 3,000sqm. (Near SLEX)
ALONG TECHNOLOGY Ave., Peoples Technology COMPLEX, Carmona Cavite Ind'l Estate, Poblacion,
Min. Bid Price: P 8,925,000

SPR_CVT260 RSDL LOT
L.A. 21,191sqm.
(Near SM & Robinson- Dasma)
CITIVIEW FARMS
Paliparan, Dasma
Min. Bid Price: P 7,344,000

SPR_CVT261 RSDL LOT
L.A. 657sqm
THE ORCHARD SUBD.
Salitran, Dasmariñas
Min. Bid Price: P 2,060,000

SPR_CVT263 HOUSE & LOT
LA 106sqm FA 111.87sqm
(Near SM & Robinson Dasmariñas)
Blk 20 Lot 11 Along Dapdong St.
GREENBREEZE Subd II., Langkaan, Dasmariñas
Min. Bid Price: P 816,000

SPR_CVT264 TOWN HOUSE
L.A. 126sqm. FA. 103sqm
(Near Golf & Country Club Village)
MANILA ORCHARD TOWNHOMES
Salitran, Dasmarinas
Min. Bid Price: P 1,701,000

SPR_CVT265 HOUSE & LOT
LA 348sqm. FA 149sqm.
(Near SM & Robinsons Dasma)
L12 B1 DON GREGORIO HTS 2 SUBD.
Abubot, Dasmariñas
Min. Bid Price: P 1,748,000

SPR_CVT266 RSDL LOT
LA 102sqm.
Lot 13 Blk 15 St. Peter Street
CARDINAL SUBD., SALITRAN DASMARIÑAS
Min. Bid Price: P 397,000

SPR_CVT267 RSDL LOT
L.A. 180 sqm.
Blk 22 Lot 16 Melbourn St.
GREENBREEZ VILL 2
(Near SM & Robinson Dasmariñas)
Min. Bid Price: P 153,000

SPR_CVT269 RSDL W/ IMPRVT
LA 218sqm. FA 523.44sqm.
Burol, Dasmariñas
Min. Bid Price: P 2,725,000

SPR_CVT271 2-STRY HSE & LOT
L.A. 592sqm FA 524sqm.
(Near Dasmariñas Town Proper)
Along Aguinaldo H-way, Salitran
DASMARIÑAS
Min. Bid Price: P 7,561,000

SPR_CVT272 HOUSE & LOT
LA 198sqm. FA.111.9sqm.
(Near Robinson Dasma)
San Juan St. Gen. Trias
Min. Bid Price: P 1,093,000

SPR_CVT273 RSDL LOT
PALLAS ATHES EXEC.
Bgy. Anabu, Imus
(Near Dasma Town Proper)
Lot Area / Min Bid Price
150sqm P 383,000
300sqm P 765,000
647sqm P 1,650,000

SPR_CVT276 RSDL LOT
L.A. 209sqm. (Near Island Cove)
Along Julio Sarayba, Kawit
Min. Bid Price: P 445,000

SPR_CVT277 2 -STRY HSE & LOT
LA. 414sqm. FA 185sqm.
w/ Internet Shop (Near Tagaytay)
#109 Along Brgy. Lucsuhin, SILANG
Min. Bid Price: P 1,576,000

SPR_CVT299 RSDL LOT
L.A. 500sqm. (Near CEPZA)
Lot 2680-M, Along REMULLA DRIVE
Brgy. Sahud, Ulan, Tanza
Min. Bid Price: P 838,000

SPR_CVT 300 RSDL LOT
GOVERNOR'S DRIVE cor. Sto. Niño St., Poblacion Ternate
(Near Puerto Azul)
Lot Area / Min Bid Price
1,000sqm P 1,530,000
1,059sqm P 1,621,000

SPR_CVT302 RSDL LOT
BALUT ISLAND, Brgy., Bucana Ternate (within the Island)
Lot Area / Min Bid Price
11,134sqm P 4,732,000
20,900sqm P 8,925,000

SPR_CVT304 RSDL LOT
MIRA HILLS SUBD.
Puerto Azul, Ternate
Lot Area / Min Bid Price
1,178sqm P 5,007,000
1,200sqm P 5,100,000
1,332sqm P 5,661,000
1,457sqm P 6,193,000

LAGUNA
Text 09208883473

SPR_LGN310 RICELAND
LA 31,519sqm (Near City Proper)
Brgy. Banadero, CALAMBA
Min. Bid Price: P 13,398,000

SPR_LGN311 RSDL/COMML LOT
L.A. 409sqm
(Beside San Jose Polymedic).
Lot 16-F-4 Along Doktora St., (Kanluran) Mayapa, CALAMBA
Min. Bid Price: P 1,739,000

SPR_LGN312 AGRI - LOT
L.A. 46,299sqm.
Bo. Layasin, CAVINTI
Min. Bid Price: P 4,830,000

SPR_LGN314 COMML LOT w/ WAREHOUSE
L.A. 300sqm. FA 600sqm.
DONA EUSEBIA SUBD.
L7 B2 Yakal St., Concepcion, San Pablo City
Min. Bid Price: P 4,125,000

LAOAG, ILOCOS

SPR_ILN005 RSDL LOT
LA. 47,835sqm.
BO. MANG-NGATO, Cabungan North
Min. Bid Price: P 11,114,000

NUEVA ECIJA
Text 09156002733

SPR_NE094 RSDL LOT w/ WRHSE
L.A. 240sqm. F.A. 160sqm
KAPITAN PEPE SUBD.,
Cabanatuan (Near Melencio Ext.)
Min. Bid Price: P 612,000

SPR_NE095 RSDL LOT
L.A. 240sqm.
(Near Melencio Ext)
KAPITAN PEPE SUBD., Cabanatuan
Min. Bid Price: P 612,000

SPR_NE090 2STRY HOUSE & LOT W/ INDUSTRIAL WAREHSE
L.A. 1,000sqm. F.A. 443sqm.
MAHARLIKA HIGHWAY,
Cabanatuan (Beside SM)
Min. Bid Price: P 9,634,000

SPR_NE097 2-DR APARTMENT
L.A. 841sqm. F.A. 50sqm
(Near Cabanatuan Plaza)
No. 281 Int. P. Del Pilar St.
Sangitan, Cabanatuan City
Min. Bid Price: P 1,225,000

SPR_NE098 RSDL VACANT LOT
L.A. 180sqm
QUIMBON EXT ST. Sangitan,
Cabanatuan (Near East Central Elem School)
Min. Bid Price: P 345,000

SPR_NE099 8-DR APRTMENT
L.A. 859sqm F.A. 887.60sqm
(Near Wesleyan)
#174 within MABINI HOMESITE,
Paludpod, Cabanatuan City
Min. Bid Price: P 3,483,000

SPR_NE100 UNFINISHED HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 880sqm. F.A. 70sqm
Lot 4 MAYAPYAP NORTE,
Kampupot St.
Min. Bid Price: P 406,000

SPR_NE101 COMML LOT
L.A. 300sqm
(near Antonio's Mall)
Brgy. Bernardo, CABANATUAN
Min. Bid Price: P 2,074,000

SPR_NE102 HOUSE & LOT
LA 108sqm FA. 108sqm
(Near Water District)
Burgos Ext. bo. Sangitan
CABANATUAN CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 840,000

SPR_NE103 2 RSDL VACANT LOTS
L.A. 400 sqm (Near Youngs Cinio)
Bo Valdefuente CABANATUAN CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 1,292,000

SPR_NE105 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 301sqm. F.A.165sqm.
Lot 1393 -C-2 Bernardo Dist.
MAHARLIKA RD, Cabanatuan
(Near Mc Donalds Sangitan)
Min. Bid Price: P 2,300,000

SPR_NE106 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,571sqm
L8, 9 and 10, Blk 21
#30 Abigail St. BRGY. KAPITAN PEPE Poblacion, Cabanatuan
(Near Kapitan Pepe Chapel)
Min. Bid Price: P 6,517,000

SPR_NE107 RSDL LOT
CABANATUAN CITY
(NEAR CROSSING OF CEBU)
Lot Area / Min. Bid Price
690sqm P 362,000
1,500sqm P 789,000
2,142sqm P 1,063,000

SPR_NE110 AGRICULTURAL
L.A.27,182sqm
Lot 531-B-1CRUZ ROJA
(Near Grand Victoria Estate)
Cabanatuan City
Min. Bid Price: P 3,837,000

SPR_NE111 HOUSE & LOT
L.A.199sqm. F.A. 65.3sqm
Lot 1 Blk 4 SAMPAGUITA St.,
Dimasalang, Cabanatuan (At the back of Plaza Labcia)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,780,000

SPR_NE112 3STRY HSE & LOT
L.A. 164sqm. F.A. 356sqm
(Near Mega Center)
Gen. Tinio St., Poblacion
CABANATUAN CITY
(Digital, Decal Landing).
Min. Bid Price: P 4,203,000

SPR_NE115 RSDL LOT
L.A. 250sqm
DON SIMON St. Poblacion,
Gapan (Near Public Market)
Min. Bid Price: P 2,125,000

SPR_NE122 RSDL LOT
L.A. 184sqm.(Within Old Muñoz)
Poblacion, Muñoz
Min. Bid Price: P 1,408,000

SPR_NE123 RSDL LOT
Bo. Malgaya, Muñoz
(Near Phil. Rice)
Lot Area / Min. Bid Price
12,964sqm P 1,102,000
14,768sqm P 1,256,000
30,527sqm P 2,595,000

SPR_NE126 AGRI LOT
L.A. 62,029sqm. (Near Phil. Rice)
Bantug, Muñoz
Min. Bid Price: P 2,109,000

SPR_NE127 RSDL LOT
Prov'l Road, Brgy. Manacnac
Palayan (Near ARC Manacnac)
Lot Area / Min. Bid Price
1,000sqm P 340,000
1,066sqm P 363,000

SPR_NE129 RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,443sqm
(Near San Mariano Hosp.)
BAN MARIANOBrgy. Maugat
Along Binangonan Rd
San Antonio, Nueva Ecija
Min. Bid Price: P 551,000

SPR_NE131 RSDL LOT
L.A. 817sqm
(Near Health Center)
EUGENIO St. Poblacion, San Jose
Min. Bid Price: P 3,473,000

SPR_NE132 2-STRY HSE & LOT
L.A. 500sqm. F.A.145.10sqm
CARDENAS ST. Poblacion, San Jose
(Near Fire Station)
Min. Bid Price: P 3,678,000

SPR_NE133 RSDL LOT
L.A. 941sqm (Near Health Center)
EUGENIO ST. Poblacion, San Jose
Min. Bid Price: P 3,774,000

SPR_NE134 2-STRY HSE & LOT
L.A. 150sqm. F.A. 125sqm
PANAHON ST. (w/in City Proper)
Calaocan, San Jose
Min. Bid Price: P 757,000

SPR_NE135 RSDL LOT
L.A. 177sqm (Near Creek of San Jose)
BO. SAN AGUSTIN, San Jose
Min. Bid Price: P 301,000

SPR_NE138 4-STRY COMML BLDG
L.A. 178sqm. F.A. 580sqm
ELSA TOWER (w/in City Proper)
Poblacion, San Jose
Min. Bid Price: P 6,477,000

SPR_NE139 2-STRY HSE & LOT
L.A. 418sqm. F.A. 338sqm
Lot 1748-B RAMOS ST.
(Near Municipal Hall)
Poblacion, San Jose
Min. Bid Price: P 2,328,000

SPR_NE140 AGRI LOT w/ WRHSE
MAPALAD, Brgy. Rd. Mapalad,
Sta. Rosa (Near Fort of Magsaysay)
Lot Area / Min. Bid Price
23,569sqm P 3,009,000
46,799sqm P 5,972,000

SPR_NE143 AGRI-LOT
Lot 6-C, Brgy Road
Bo. San Pascual, Sto. Domingo
(Near Provincial Road)
Lot Area / Min. Bid Price
7,795sqm P 531,000
4,025sqm P 335,000

SPR_NE144 RSDL LOT
L.A. 2,152.5sqm (Near Nat'l Road)
Lot 124-B-1/L -124-B-3CALIPAHAN, Talavera
Min. Bid Price: P 563,000

SPR_NE145 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 222sqm. FA. 63sqm
(In front of Caventa Gasoline Stn)
Bo. SAN RICARDO, Talavera
Min. Bid Price: P 201,000

SPR_NE146 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 414sqm. FA 112sqm.
Bo. La Torre Talavera
(Near Hidden Garden Resort)
Min. Bid Price: P 319,000

SPR_NE147 RSDL LOT
L.A. 423sqm (Near Sea Oil)
ANDAL ALINO SUBD Talavera
Min. Bid Price: P 324,000

SPR_NE149 - RSDL LOT
MAHARLIKA Rd. Bagong Silang,
Talavera (Within City Proper)
Lot Area / Min. Bid Price
232sqm P 33,000
416sqm P 60,000
9,061sqm P 1,268,000
9,080sqm P 1,394,000
9,961sqm P 1,394,000

SPR_NE155 RSDL LOT
LA 4,319sqm
(Near Provincial Rd)
Bo. of San Pascual, TALAVERA
Min. Bid Price: P 3,304,000

PAMPANGA
Text 09266722888

SPR_PAM157 WAREHOUSE
LA. 618sqm, FA169sqm.
Quezon Rd., MEXICO
(NLP Truck Builders)
Min. Bid Price: P 958,000

SPR_PAM158 RSDL LOT
L.A1,808sqm.
Quezon Rd. Bo. San Nicolas, MEXICO
Min. Bid Price: P 385,000

SPR_PAM159 RSDL LOT
L.A. 600sqm.
B4 L21 Don Gregorio St.,
ST. FRANCIS VILLAGE
Bo. Dolores San Fernando
Min. Bid Price: P 1,241,000

SPR_PAM160 COMML W/ HOUSE & LOT
LA 308sqm (Across Plaza Garcia)
664 Mc Arthur H-way, Dolores, SAN FERNANDO
Min. Bid Price: P 13,121,000

SPR_PAM165 RSDL LOT
LA 32,698sqm (Front of SO Farm)
Lot-157-B Along San Isidro Rd.
Bo. San Pedro, SAN SIMON
Min. Bid Price: P 6,947,000

SPR_PAM166 HOUSE & LOT
LA 120sqm FA 180sqm
Lot 3 Blk 2 San Matias
(Near San Matias Elem Schl)
STO. TOMAS
Min. Bid Price: P 902,000

SPR_PAM167 RSDL LOT
L.A 400 sqm.
Morea Dela Paz, STO. TOMAS
Min. Bid Price: P 66,000

SPR_PAM169 HOUSE &LOT
LA. 600sqm FA 117.5sqm.
STO. TOMAS
(Near Petron and FC clinic)
Min. Bid Price: P 408,000

SPR_PAM170 1-STRY COMML BLDG
LA 4,280sqm. F.A. 2,449 sqm.
Bo. Dalaquitan SAN MATIAS, Sto. Tomas
Min. Bid Price: P 13,515,000

PANGASINAN
Text 09164348252

SPR_PSN006 RSDL LOT
L.A.1620sqm.
(Near Basista Market)
NO 8 MAGSAYSAY AVE.
Poblacion, Basista Pangasinan
Min. Bid Price: P 1,118,000

SPR_PSN007 VACANT LOT
DON JUAN COMP. San Felipe Sur Binalonan
(Near Petron Gasoline Station)
Lot Area / Min. Bid Price
100sqm P 43,000
107sqm P 46,000
139sqm P 148,000
141sqm P 150,000
4,668sqm P 992,000

SPR_PSN051 2-STRY OLD HSE
LA. 608.43sqm. FA 100sqm
247 Brgy. Quesban, Celestico Pangasinan (Near Gabon Bridge)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,582,000

SPR_PSN052 RSDL LOT
Lot 4379-A-4-E-3
Along Un named St.,
TAPUAC DISTRICT Dagupan City
(Near LNC College)
Lot Area / Min. Bid Price
168sqm P 286,000 (2 lots avail.)
401sqm P 682,000

SPR_PSN055 APRTMNT UNITS
Lot 4367 -a-2, 2nd St.,
cor An Alley BRGY. TAPUAC, Dagupan City

Lot Area	Floor Area	Min. Bid Price
60sqm	81.63sqm	P 820,000
61sqm	82.72sqm	P 833,000
68sqm	92.21sqm	P 929,000

SPR_PSN059 BUNGALOW HSE
L.A. 238sqm. FA 165sqm
2007 within MARAMBA VILL.
Pantal Dist, Dagupan City
(Near Nepo Mall)
Min. Bid Price: P 975,000

SPR_PSN060 OLD BUNGALOW
LA. 301sqm.
No.364 Salazar St.
BRGY. TEBENG DIST.
Dagupan City (Near Slaughter House)
Min. Bid Price: P 919,000

SPR_PSN061 RSDL LOT
LA 32,906sqm.
(Near Mangatarem Elem Schl)
Bo. Bueno, MANGATAREM
Min. Bid Price: P 979,000

SPR_PSN062 RSDL LOT
LA. 3,057sqm.
(Near Barangay Hall)
Bo. Torres, MAPANDAN
Min. Bid Price: P 520,000

SPR_PSN063 RSDL LOT
LA1,473sqm.
Lot 2526 A. Luna St. Poblacion, SAN CARLOS
Min. Bid Price: P 762,000

SPR_PSN065 RSDL LOT
LA 3,666sqm.
(Near Tulao Bridge)
F. Villanueva, STA. BARBARA
Min. Bid Price: P 1,950,000

SPR_PSN066 2STRY OLD HOUSE W/ ROOFDECK
L.A. 5,256sqm. F.A 200
Lot 2-A No 50 Brgy. Pinmaludpud
URDANETA, Pangasinan
Min. Bid Price: P 3,046,000

SPR_PSN067 RSDL LOT
L.A. 300sqm (5 Lots Available)
DARAMUNGAN St.
Brgy. Pinmaludpud, URDANETA
Min. Bid Price 265,000 EACH

QUEZON PROVINCE
Text 09209222405

SPR_QP352 SUBDIVISION LOTS
L.A. 12,031sqm.
(Near Town Proper)
National Hi-way, Masin Sur
CANDELARIA
Min. Bid Price: P 19,188,000

SPR_QP354 RSDL LOT
PUERTO DEL MAR SUBD.
Ilayang Sabang, Lucena
(Near DFA Office)
Lot Area / Min. Bid Price
204sqm P 434,000
221sqm P 470,000
2000sqm P 590,000
5000sqm P 850,000

SPR_QP358 2-STRY HSE & LOT
L.A. 232sqm. F.A. 167.8sqm
BETTER LIVING SUBD.
Lucena City (Near DFA Office)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,637,000

SPR_QP359 VACANT LOT
L.A 9501sqm (Near Lucena Capitol)
Lot 4, Lorela St. Interior
BRGY. COTTA
Min. Bid Price: P 2,019,000

SPR_QP360VACANT LOT
L.A. 3850sqm.
(Beside Metropolis Subd)
Along Diversion Rd.
Bgy Ibabang Dupay,LUCENA CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 2,404,000

TAGAYTAY
Text 09175443063

SPR_TGY221 RAWLAND
LA. 15,000sqm
(NEAR WOODLAND)
Brgy. Birinayan(Laurel)
TAGAYTAY RIDGE
Min. Bid Price: P 15,173,000

SPR_TGY226 RSDL LOT
RODEO HILLS SUBD.
Brgy. Matabac Alfonso
(Near Splendido)
Lot Area / Min. Bid Price
375sqm P 336,000
375sqm P 447,000
431sqm P 660,000
1,280sqm P 1,104,000

SPR_TGY278 RSDL LOT
L.A. 8,059sqm
(Overlooking Taal)
LIGAYA DRIVE Brgy. Sungay
Min. Bid Price: P 17,126,000

SPR_TGY279 RSDL LOT
TAGAYTAY WOODSBORROUGH
(Near Tagaytay Soto Grande)
Brgy. Guinhawa
Lot Area / Min Bid Price
180sqm P 460,000
200sqm P 510,000
260sqm P 663,000
312sqm P 796,000

SPR_TGY285 RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,992.5sqm. (Interior lot)
Lot 3 A Bo. ANCLING,
Purok 132, Brgy. Neogan
Min. Bid Price: P 1,086,000

TARLAC
Text 09103086112

SPR_TAR172 - RSDL LOT
LA 3,092sqm
(Near Camp Macabulos).
B2 L8,14,15, SAN VICENTE HILLS SUBD. San Vicente
Min. Bid Price: P 2,310,000

SPR_TAR173 RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,028 sqm.
Lot 830-C-3 Bo. Tibag,
ROMULO HIGHWAY
Min. Bid Price: P 569,000

SPR_TAR174 HOUSE & LOT
LA 207sqm FA 90sqm
Jasmin St. San Roque
CAPITOL GARDENS SUBD.
Min. Bid Price: P 634,000

SPR_TAR175 RSDL LOT
L.A. 2,233 sqm
Bo. SAPANG MARAGUL
Min Bid Price: 407,000

SPR_TAR176 RSDL LOT
L.A. 4,798 sqm.
Bo. SAPANG MARAGUL
Min Bid Price: 407,000

SPR_TAR178 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 247sqm. F.A. 221sqm
No.4 Don Bengino St.
AQUINO SUBD, Sto. Cristo
(Near 7/11 Store)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,108,000

SPR_TAR179 HOUSE & LOT
L.A.320sqm F.A. 90sqm
Lot 4-A, along Macabulos Drive
SAN VICENTE (Near Mc Arthur Hway)
Min. Bid Price: P 498,000

SPR_TAR 180 RSDL LOT
Bo. SAN ISIDRO
Lot Area / Min. Bid Price
642sqm P 171,000
2,979sqm P 570,000

SPR_TAR182 RSDL LOT
L.A. 928sqm (Near City Hall)
Along San Fernando St.
SAN FERNANDO, Victoria
Min. Bid Price: P 947,000

SPR_TAR183 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 247sqm. F.A.119sqm
Lot 4 Blk 25 Along Ma Gomez Ave., SAN SEBASTIAN VILL.
Ph.3 Bo. San Roque (Near Gate II)
Min. Bid Price: P 726,000

SPR_TAR184 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 300sqm. F.A.186sqm
SUNRISE SUBD. Maliwalo
(Near Radio Maria)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,015,000

SPR_TAR185 RSDL LOT
JOEMAC SUBD. San Vicente
(Near Camp Macabulos)
Lot Area / Min. Bid Price
990sqm P 842,000
1,143sqm P 972,000
1,028sqm P 1,049,000

SPR_TAR188 RSDL LOT
L.A. 3,400sqm.
Sitio BANGA-BANGA
Min. Bid Price: P 578,000

SPR_TAR189 BUNGALOW HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 447sqm. F.A. 72sqm
No 227 Bo. Sto. Domingo II
CAPAZ (Near Capaz Juction)
Min. Bid Price: P 511,000

SPR_TAR190 RSDL LOT
Ventura Ave. Lot 9 Blk 7
Along Ventura Ave.,
SAN SEBASTIAN VILL. Ph-3,
Tarlac (Near Vilmar Hotel)
Lot Area / Min. Bid Price
240sqm. P 347,000
269sqm P 389,000

SPR_TAR192 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 303sqm. F.A.155sqm.
#28 SAN RAFAEL HOMESITE SUBD.
San Rafael (Near Vilmar Hotel)
Min. Bid Price: P 798,000

SPR_TAR193 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 887sqm. F.A. 112sqm.
Sitio Malgaya, SAPANG MARAGUL
Min. Bid Price: P 426,000

SPR_TAR194 RSDL LOT
L.A. 400sqm.
Brgy. STA. CRUZ
(formerly Bo. Alvindia)
Min. Bid Price: P 68,000

SPR_TAR195 RSDL LOT
L.A. 264sqm.
582 BLOSSOMVILLE SUBD.,
Matatalahib
Min. Bid Price: P 449,000

SPR_TAR200 RSDL LOT
LA 18,813sqm.
Bo. DOLORES, Tarlac
Min. Bid Price: P 1,055,000

SPR_TAR201 RSDL LOT
SAN JUAN DE MATA and Sto. Niño
(Near Romulo Highway)
Lot Area / Min. Bid Price
120sqm P 189,000
123sqm P 194,000
150sqm P 238,000
304sqm P 517,000

SPR_TAR217 RSDL LOT
L.A. 373sqm
(Beside Banco San Juan)
M. H. Del Pilar St., Bo. STO. CRISTO
Min. Bid Price: P 4,756,000

VISAYAS

AKLAN
Text 09206186282

SPR_AKN547 RSDL LOT
L.A. 5,874sqm.
Cor Lacerna & Archbishop Reyes St., Poblacion, KALIBO
Min Bid Price: P 37,023,000

BACOLOD CITY

SPR_BAC548 - RSDL LOT
L.A. 940sqm
(Near Gaisano Mall)
Along ARANETA ST., Singcang
Min Bid Price: P 8,189,000

SPR_BAC549 - HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 300sqm F.A. 183.60sqm
Lot 3-AA&B Blk-12 Margarita St.
Capitolville Subd., (Near Dela Salle)
Min Bid Price: P 2,621,000

CEBU CITY
Text 09266256957

SPR_CEB558VACANT LOT
L.A. 934 sqm
(Near Gaisano Country Mall)
Paseo Mariano, Ph3,
MA. LUISA ESTATE SUBD.
Min Bid Price: P 2,382,000

SPR_CEB559 3-STRY COMML BLDG
L.A. 1,700sqm F.A. 2,327.8sqm
(Near Tabunoc Public Market)
3289-A Along Nat'l Highway,
TABUNOC, Talisay
Min Bid Price: P 22,018,000

SPR_CEB560 2-STRY HSE & LOT
L.A. 680sqm F.A. 332sqm
(Near Guadalupe Church)
Along road right of way,
within CAVANS COMPD.
Bo. Guadalupe
Min Bid Price: P 3,548,000

SPR_CEB561 2-STRY HSE & LOT
L.A. 300sqm F.A. 600sqm
(Near Foodarama Market)
Lot 8397-A-5 Bo. Interior of
H. Cuijnda St. Guadalupe
Min Bid Price: P 3,219,000

ILOILO
Text 09209186282

SPR_ILO550 RSDL LOT
L.A 88,318sqm
Tagaing, STA BARBARA
Min Bid Price: P 1,743,000

NEGROS OCCIDENTAL

SPR_NO554 RSDL LOT
L.A. 700sqm
No. 1 Jose Abad Santos St.
CABUG SUBD. Silay City
Min Bid Price: P 765,000

SPR_NO555 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 240 sqm F.A. 90.3 sqm
Blk 9 Lot 10 Hallerna st.,
Zone 3 Antilla Subd., Silay City
Min Bid Price: P 526,000

SPR_NO556 RSDL LOT
L.A. 405 sqm
GAMBAO SUBD., Talisay City
Min Bid Price: P 310,000

SPR_NO557 RSDL LOT
L.A. 71,964sqm
BRGY. LOPEZ JAENA, Sagay City
Min Bid Price: 728,000

MINDANAO

BUTUAN CITY
Text 09203338161

SPR_BUT562 RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,637sqm
(Near St. Peter Memorial Chapel)
C.M Recto Langihan
Min Bid Price: P 1,431,000

CAGAYAN

SPR_CAG002 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 225sqm F.A. 285sqm.
P BURGOS, Poblacion,
Tuguegarao, Cagayan
Min. Bid Price: P 1,615,000

SPR_CAG004 HOUSE & LOT
LA 302sqm FA 48sqm.
L2-A MAGALLANES St.
Poblacion, Tuguegarao
Min. Bid Price: P 2,139,000

SPR_CAG003 RSDL LOT
L.A. 3,495sqm.
No.2 Poblacion, UNO MAGALLANES ST.
Tuguegarao, Cagayan
Min. Bid Price: P 2,971,000

CAGAYAN DE ORO
Text 09217388888

SPR_CDO563 VACANT LOT
L.A. 300sqm
(Near Carmon Cars Display Center)
within SALCEDO VILLAGE
Brgy. Kauswagan
Min Bid Price: P 510,000

SPR_CDO564 VACANT LOT
L.A. 1,000sqm
(Near Kauswagan Elmen. School)
Along PASIL St., Brgy. Kauswagan
Min Bid Price: P 1,221,000

SPR_CDO565 VACANT LOT
BO. CANITOAN, CDO
(Near Women's Dev't Center)
Lot Area / Min Bid Price
46,116sqm P 981,000
65,760sqm P 839,000

COTABATO
Text 09192653012

SPR_COT567 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 286sqm F.A. 150sqm
Lot 7-H-6 Doña Blanco St.
SUPERMARKETSITE
Min Bid Price: P 1,487,000

SPR_COT568 RDSL LOT
L.A. 400sqm
No.206 SK PENDATUN EXT.,
Poblacion 2,
Min Bid Price: P 503,000

SPR_COT569 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 343sqm F.A. 293sqm
2nd St., DON E. SERO SUBD.
RH-5, De Mazenod Ave.
Min Bid Price: P 873,000

SPR_COT570 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 417sqm F.A. 680.2sqm
L3 B62 7th St. DON E. SERO
Min Bid Price: P 5,920,000

SPR_COT571 RSDL LOT
L.A. 406sqm
L2 B62 7th St. DON E. SERO
Min Bid Price: P 618,000

SPR_COT572 HOUSE & LOT
L.A.1,264sqm F.A. 320sqm
Lot 182 Blk 2 Macapagal St.
BRGY. COLINA ROSARY HGHTS
Min Bid Price: P 2,418,000

SPR_COT573 RSDL LOT
L.A. 142sqm
Lot 3 Bonifacio St.,
Min Bid Price: P 4,141,000

SPR_COT574 RSDL LOT
L.A. 430sqm
Rosal St., Int. Pag-asa
Min Bid Price: P 511,000

SPR_COT576 RSDL LOT
L.A 230sqm
DON ROMAN VILO St.,
Min Bid Price: P 12,402,000

SPR_COT577 RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,200sqm
GOV. GUTIERREZ Ave.,
Min Bid Price: P 8,404,000

SPR_COT578 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 440sqm F.A 180sqm
L4 B3 ANACLETO BADOY EXT.
Min Bid Price: P 848,000

SPR_COT579 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 609sqm F.A. 242sqm
SANTOS St.,
Min Bid Price: P 1,898,000

SPR_COT580 RSDL LOT
L.A. 471sqm
SINSUAT, Cotabato City
Min Bid Price: P 781,000

SPR_COT581 RSDL LOT
Lot 17, Blk 13, Sesame St., De MAZANOD AVE.
Lot Area / Min Bid Price
400sqm P 238,000
641sqm P 382,000

SPR_COT583 2-STRY HSE & LOT
L.A. 819sqm F.A. 159.3sqm
Subd., Rd. Intersecting
Macapagal St. & Pascual St.
Cotabato
Min Bid Price: P 1,159,000

SPR_COT584 RSDL LOT
L.A. 313sqm
Makakua St., Pob. 5,
Min Bid Price: P 5,321,000

SPR_COT585 RSDL LOT
L.A. 46,506sqm
Lot 8, Malagapas St., ROSARY HTS.
Min Bid Price: P 4,203,000

SPR_COT586 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 235sqm F.A. 174sqm
Lot 8 Blk 13, E. Basugion St.
NOTRE DAME VILL. Kakar,
Rosario Hts.
Min Bid Price: P 1,547,000.

SPR_COT587 VACANT LOT
L.A. 83sqm
Quezon Ave. COTABATO
Min Bid Price: P 706,000

SPR_COT588 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 600sqm F.A. 567sqm
Rabago St,
Min Bid Price: P 3,402,000

SPR_COT589 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 500sqm F.A. 120sqm
Rabago St,
Min Bid Price: P 2,744,000

SPR_COT590 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 300sqm F.A. 323sqm
Sousa St.
Min Bid Price: P 2,740,000

SPR_COT591 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 471sqm F.A 42sqm
ROSARY HEIGHTS
Min Bid Price: P 1,278,000

DAVAO
Text 09219703112

SPR_DAV593 RSDL LOT
L.A. 15,237sqm
Bago LIBBY
Min Bid Price: P 2,331,000

SPR_DAV594 RSDL LOT
L.A. 12,230sqm
Lot 1-0790 Sanggalanan, MA-A,
Min Bid Price: P 2,609,000

SPR_DAV606 RSDL LOT
L.A 5,796sqm
No. 89 Sitio NEW LOON, Mintal,
Min Bid Price: P 483,000

SPR_DAV608 HOUSE & LOT
L.A 1,828sqm F.A 3,800sqm
San Miguel, MATINA,
Min Bid Price: P 14,444,000

SPR_DAV607 VACANT LOT
L.A 2,191sqm
Bago Aplaya, Toril Dist. Davao
Min Bid Price: P 932,000

SPR_DAV608 RSDL LOT
L.A 917sqm
Purok 8 St. PAGKAKAISA VILL. Sto. Niño
Min Bid Price: P 390,000

SPR_DAV609 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 399sqm F.A. 108.2sqm
Brgy. Rd. ESPINO SUBD. Dumoy
Min Bid Price: P 686,000

SPR_DAV610 RSDL LOT
L.A. 88,550sqm
Brgy TIBUNGCO,
Min Bid Price: P 3,213,000

SPR_DAV611 RSDL LOT
L.A. 3,144sqm
Purok Waling-waling,
SEMINARY DRIVE, Tagum
Min Bid Price: 1,871,000

SPR_DAV612 RSDL LOT
L.A. 4,627sqm
Lot 16 Blk 33, DALLAO, Toril
Min Bid Price: P 3,079,000

SPR_DAV613 COMML LOT
L.A. 1,065sqm
#200 JOSE CAMUS St. Poblacion
Min Bid Price: P 4,038,000

SPR_DAV614 RSDL LOT
L.A. 2,109sqm
Lot 7605-F Balusong 3, SM VILLAGE EXT., Bangkal
Min Bid Price: P 704,000

SPR_DAV615 COMML BLDG
L.A 19,152sqm
Km. 7, J. P. LAUREL AVE. Lanang
Min Bid Price: P 88,373,000

GENERAL SANTOS
Text 09267666746

SPR_GSC616 RSDL LOT
L.A 37,965sqm
MENESES RD. Brgy. Lagao.
Min Bid Price: P 5,357,000

SPR_GSC317 VACANT LOT
L.A 11,424sqm
DIVERSION RD. Bo. of Apopong
Min Bid Price: P 1,651,000

MAGUINDANAO

SPR_MAG620 RSDL LOT
L.A. 301 sqm. (3 lots available)
BANUBO, Sultan Kudarat
Min Bid Price: P 77,000 each

SPR_MAG624 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 647sqm. F.A 220sqm
L2291-B-1 SALIMBAO
Sultan Kudarat
Min Bid Price: P 1,392,000

SPR_MAG625 HOUSE & LOT
L.A 2,000sqm. F.A 540sqm
L-141 B-13 SALIMBAO
Sultan Kudarat
Min Bid Price: P 3,564,000

SPR_MAG626 WRHSE BLDG
L.A. 2,063sqm. F.A
Bo. Gang, Sultan Kudarat
Min Bid Price: P 3,288,000

SPR_MAG627 INDSL & RSDL LOT
L.A. 17,417sqm.
CROSSING PINARING, Sultan Kudarat
Min Bid Price: P 5,460,000

ZAMBOANGA
Text 09209067769

SPR_ZAM628 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 645sqm F.A. 370sqm
(Near Downtown)
Ilang-ilang St. VILLA STA. MARIA
Min Bid Price: P 2,143,000

SPR_ZAM631 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1000sqm F.A. 564.91sqm
(Near Manang Perry's)
Jesus Cobato Drive, Canelar
Min Bid Price: P 3,433,000

SPR_ZAM633 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 400sqm F.A.
255.25sqm(Near DOLE Office)
Dona Pura Drive Tetuan
Min Bid Price: P 2,420,000

SPR_ZAM637 RSDL LOT
L.A. 307sqm
Jacobo Dr., cor Alley Brgy. Tetuan
Min Bid Price: P 1,377,000

SPR_ZAM639 RSDL LOT
L.A. 724sqm (Near Martian Garden Orchid Hotel)
GOVERNOR S CAMINS RD, Brgy. Canelar
Min Bid Price: P 5,539,000

SPR_ZAM651 VACANT LOT
Don Alfaro, TETUAN
(Near Alta Mall)
Lot Area / Min Bid Price
1,000sqm P 585,000
2,958sqm P 1,759,000

SPR_ZAM653 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 240sqm F.A. 274sqm
2nd St. AURORA VILL., Guiwan
Min Bid Price: P 1,784,000

SPR_ZAM654 RSDL LOT
L.A. 2,453sqm
(Near Mormons Church)
Along MORMONS DRIVE. Tetuan
Min Bid Price: P 3,322,000

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Japanese firms rank RP low as investment site

Cite weak legal system, rising wages, IPR violations

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE PHILIPPINES ranked second-lowest among 19 markets across the globe in which Japanese firms planned to transfer or expand their activities in the next three years, according to the latest poll by the Japan External Trade Organization.

Results of Jetro's Survey on International Operations of Japanese Firms also showed that respondents thought the Philippines was the riskiest place in Asia to do business in in terms of political and social instability, with 52.5 percent of those polled saying so.

Japanese firms believed the Philippines was less stable than Indonesia (50.4 percent) and China (41.3 percent). Respondents saw Singapore as the most stable location in Asia, with only 0.8 percent disagreeing.

Jetro said in a statement the yearly survey was last conducted in November and December 2006, receiving replies from 729 firms or 28.7 percent of the 2,537 companies sent questionnaires.

Firms were polled on their international and domestic operations, plans to expand business in China, business environments in Asia, free-trade agreements in the Asia-Pacific region, including those with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations—with the entire group as well as bilaterally with some members—and rules of origin.

The percentage points for each market—a region, country, or territory—were calculated based only on the number of respondents operating there. In the Philippines, 177 firms took part in the survey.

Other respondents were spread out in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, India, United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Western Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and locations classified collectively as "Other."

Jetro found that among the eight Asian destinations, the Philippines (20.9 percent) was the second to have the least developed or accumulated industries related to respondents' businesses.

In terms of underdeveloped infrastructure, the Philippines (32.2 percent) was better off only when compared to India and Vietnam.

Of the respondents based here, 13 percent said there were problems with legal procedures and the legal system was underdeveloped; 7.9 percent said they worried about the peso; 9 percent said there were problems with the protection of intellectual property rights.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
CORPORATION FINANCE DEPARTMENT

FIRST METRO SAVE AND LEARN! BALANCED FUND, INC.
Registrant

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that on February 21, 2007, a sworn Registration Statement was filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission for and on behalf of FIRST METRO SAVE AND LEARN BALANCED FUND, INC. for the registration of One Hundred Million (100,000,000) common shares with a par value of P1.00 each, or an aggregate value of One Hundred Million Pesos (P100,000,000.00), representing its entire authorized capital stock.

According to the papers/documents presented, the following persons are the directors/officers of the corporation:

NAME	POSITION
Atty. Antonio M. Bernardo	Chairman of the Board & Director
Edwin B. Valencia	President & Director
Eduardo A. Mendoza	Director
Hon. Manuel V. De Leon, ESQ.	Independent Director
Gloria C. Gonzalo	Independent Director
Atty. Nimfa D. Pastrana	Corporate Secretary
Paulo G. Gonzalez	Chief Financial Officer
Marie Azabella D. Veron	Treasurer
Jonathan T. Tybor	Compliance Officer

Said Registration Statement and other papers/documents attached thereto are open to inspection by interested parties during business hours and copies thereof, photostatic or otherwise, shall be furnished to every party at such reasonable fees as the Commission may prescribe.

JESUS P. CALLANGAN
Actg. Director

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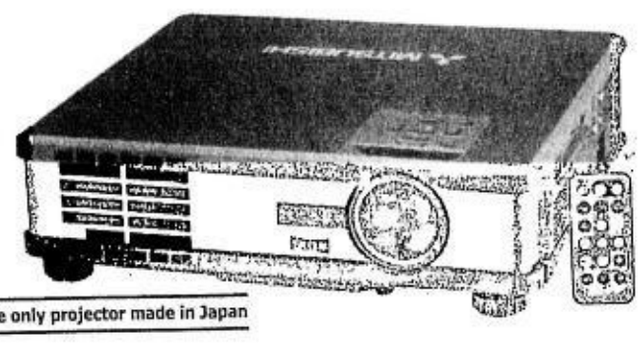
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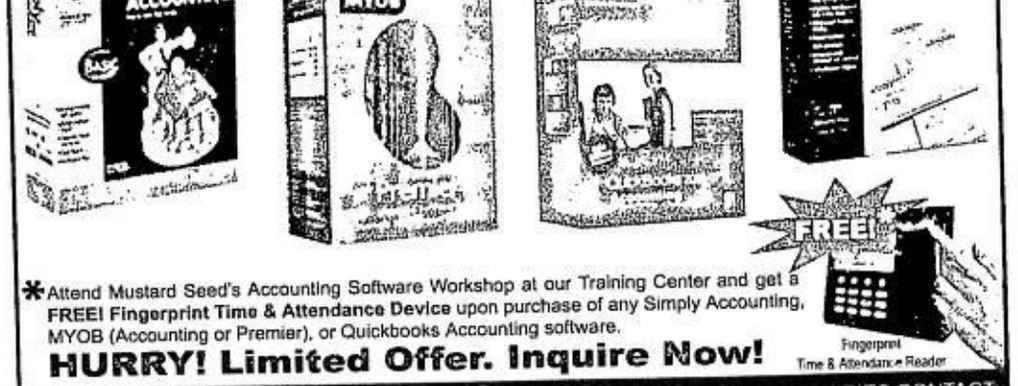

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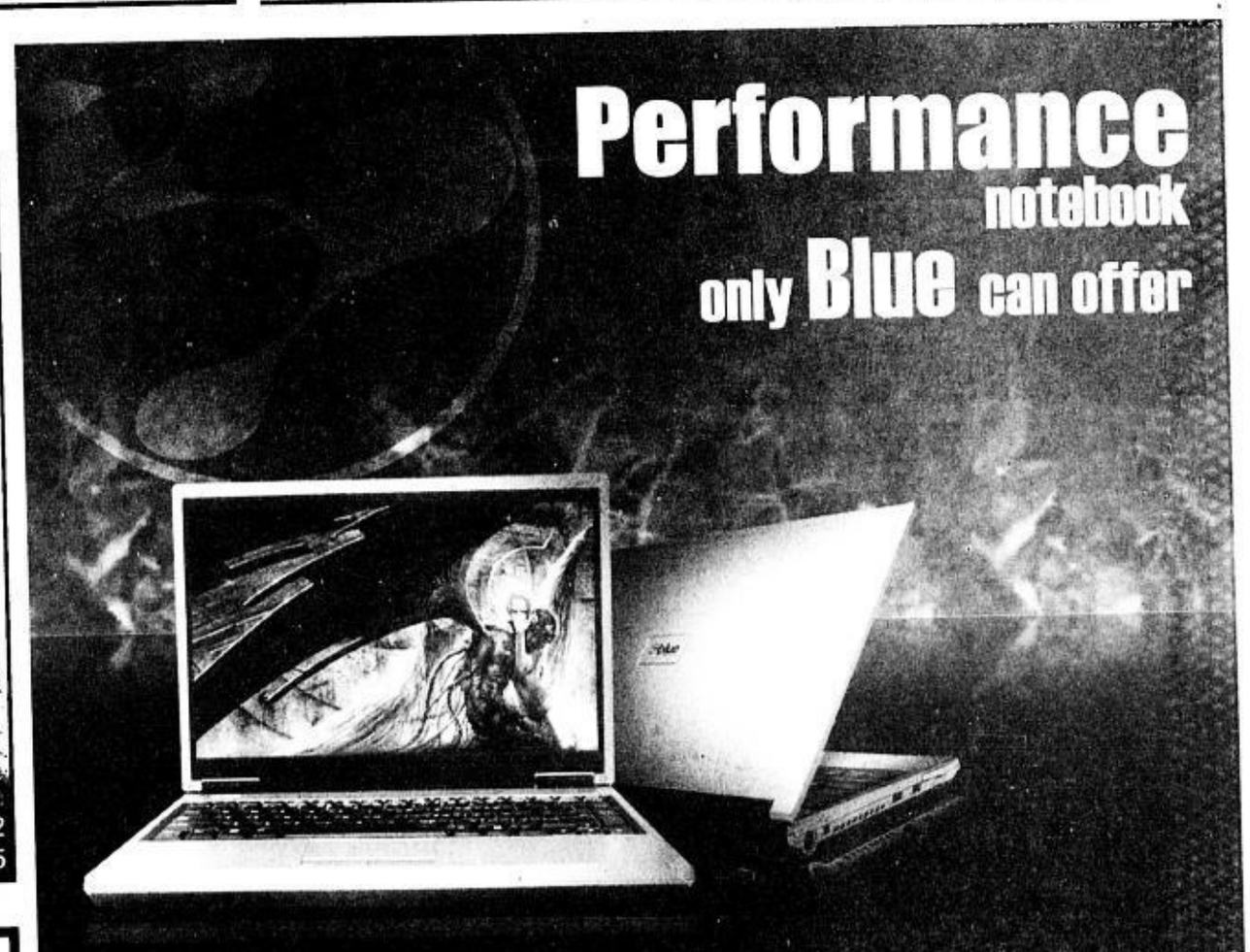
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P540-M rights offering of EEI gets SEC approval

By Daxim L. Lucas

CORPORATE REGULATORS HAVE APPROVED the plan of construction firm EEI Corp. to raise P540 million in fresh funds through a stock rights offer.

In a statement to the Philippine Stock Exchange, EEI president Robert Jose Castillo said the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) approved en banc the preemptive offer of 120 million new EEI common shares with a par value of P1 at the subscription price of P4.50 a share.

"The firm is optimistic about the success of its fund-raising exercise given the local stock market's continued positive overall prospects," he said.

The offer period for the stock rights began last Friday, March 9, and will run until March 22, the company said. RCBC Capital Corp. has been hired as the issue manager and lead underwriter for the company's stock rights offer.

Under the scheme, the shares will be issued from the authorized and unissued capital stock and will be offered to shareholders of record as of March 8.

They will be entitled to subscribe to one share for every 7.6257 common shares held. With the offering of 120 million new shares, the firm's outstanding number of common shares will increase to 1.04 billion after the completion of the exercise.

According to EEI, the proceeds of the offering will be used to retire existing bank debt and finance working capital requirements.

The company expects to net an estimated P520.9 million from the rights offer after deducting listing fees, taxes and other related fees and expenses.

EEI said it has allocated P202.9 million from the net proceeds for working capital for the Coral Bay nickel mining project of Japan Gas Corp. (JGC) in Rio-Tuba, Palawan, the petro fluid catalytic cracker (FCC) project of the Petron refinery in Bataan under Daelim of Korea and the Shang Grand Towers owned by Kuok Properties.

"The three projects, which had been awarded last year, are estimated to cost P2.84 billion," the company said in its statement.

EEI is undertaking civil, structural, electromechanical and piping works for the Rio Tuba nickel mining and refining project for the second refining facility of Coral Bay Nickel. It was also involved in the construction of the latter's first nickel plant in the Rio Tuba complex.

Meanwhile, the $23-million Petro FCC project involves revamping, civil, building, electro-mechanical and installation works for the Petron refinery complex in Limay, Bataan. The catalytic cracker facility is part of the process of petroleum refining.

EEI also serves as the general contractor for the Shang Grand Towers, which is composed of two 60-storey towers, which when completed will be the country's tallest buildings.

The company undertook civil and foundation works while structural construction is underway for the two buildings. It will also undertake architectural finishing and fit-out works.

The balance of P318 million from the rights offer's proceeds will be used to partially retire outstanding working capital loans.

Sun Life says mutual fund sales hit P2.6B in end-Feb.

THE LOCAL MUTUAL FUND UNIT OF INSURance giant Sun Life Financial reported a sharp rise in sales in the first two months of 2007 despite the lackluster year-to-date performance of the stock market.

In a statement, Sun Life Prosperity Funds (SLPF) said it posted sales of well over P2.6 billion at the end of February, which already accounts for approximately 45 percent of total mutual fund sales made last year.

The robust sales came as the stock market hit highs last experienced before the onset of the 1997 East Asian financial crisis, but corrected sharply afterwards after a sharp sell-off in the main Chinese bourse triggered jitters in equities markets around the world.

"It is truly remarkable how we have managed to stay way ahead of our sales pace this year compared to last year considering some of the minor ripples that hit the market recently," SLPF president and CEO Henry Joseph Herrera said.

"If you recall, as of September 2006, we made it to the number two spot in terms of annualized gross sales," he added. "And by all indications, we are optimistic that we will outperform our sales performance last year."

It remains unclear, however, how the recent sell-off in stocks will affect the sales of Sun Life, in particular, and the country's nascent mutual fund industry, in general.

As of the latest data, Sun Life now has P13.5 billion in assets under management, which is 19 percent higher than the end-2006 level of P11.4 billion.

The year-on-year net returns on the Prosperity Funds have so far beat the market's average performance. Its equity fund so far leads the pack with a net after tax return of 47 percent.

Its balanced fund, consisting of both fixed income and equities, came in second with a yield of 35 percent, while the government securities fund generated a net after tax return of 12 percent. Its bond fund, meanwhile, delivered an 11-percent return.

"We have never experienced anything like this before and we are enthusiastic about the future of the Prosperity Funds," Herrera said. "Filipinos are getting more and more attuned to the idea of investing. By taking on some risks as compared to traditional investment instruments, returns on mutual funds can be substantially higher."

The Sun Life Prosperity Funds are managed and distributed by Sun Life Asset Management Co. Inc., a member of the Sun Life Financial group of companies.

Daxim L. Lucas

Analysts expect trading activity to weaken this week

THE LOCAL STOCK MARKET WOULD LIKELY continue to consolidate this week after the share price volatility it experienced over the last two weeks, market watchers said.

The next few months might also prove to be a roller-coaster ride for stock investors in the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), according to AB Capital Securities Inc.

"We believe that a period of consolidation after a very volatile couple of months is both to be expected and healthy," it said in a research note to clients. "Locally, we don't see investors making anything meaningful."

The PSE index ended the last trading week at 3,099.82 points, a 1.29-percent decline from the previous week's 3,140.34 points.

Average trading volumes have also declined to P4.8 billion a day, down 22.7 percent from P6.2 billion the week before.

Historically, a period of consolidation is preceded by declining value turnover as new investors become more hesitant to jump in while existing investors become equally hesitant to liquidate their positions.

According to AB Capital, the local stock market would not be helped by developments abroad.

"Global stock markets are staging their own recovery rally after a traumatic sell-off," the broker said. "However, we don't think this would translate to a return of our bullish ways in the short term."

"Instead, we see markets moving sideways, building a new base that will support a second advance later this year," AB Capital predicted.

Abacus Securities Corp. urged its own clients to adopt a "sell on rally" strategy because of strong resistance near the 3,200- and 3,300-point levels.

Daxim L. Lucas

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 9, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	11	11.25	11	11	102,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	56	57.5	56	57	2,311,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	65	66.5	65	65.5	1,814,400
China Banking Corp.	850	850	850	850	1,610
Citystate Savings Bank	20	20	20	20	500
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.51	0.52	0.5	0.5	5,570,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	98	101	98	100	8,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	59	61	59	60	4,620,600
Philippine National Bank	46	47.5	46	47.5	8,600
Phil. Savings Bank	60	63	59	63	53,200
Security Bank Corp.	76	78	76	77	652,300
Union Bank of the Phil.	58	58	58	58	9,700
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	170,000
Cilliseconline Com Inc.	6.2	6.7	6.2	6.6	980,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1600	1600	1600	1600	50
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.86	1.86	194,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	700	720	700	715	106,070
Ivantage Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	574,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.7	6	5.7	5.8	53,379,000
First Gen Corp.	51.5	52.5	51.5	51.5	1,751,700
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	71.5	72	71.5	72	683,200
Manila Electric Co. A	70	71	69.5	70.5	781,100
Manila Electric Co. B	70	71	69.5	71	4,518,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.1	9.1	9	9	3,155,000
Petron Corp.	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.3	4,712,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.23	0.25	0.23	0.25	3,050,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.32	1.36	1.32	1.36	1,348,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	30,000
Cen Azucar De Tarlac	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	3,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	24.5	24.5	24.5	24.5	3,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	49	50.5	49	50.5	285,800
RFM Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	90,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	20,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	130,000
San Miguel Corp. A	62.5	62.5	61.5	62	48,800
San Miguel Corp. B	71	71.5	71	71.5	40,700
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	1.96	2	1.94	1.98	1,647,000
Universal Robina Corp.	18	18.25	18	18	3,014,400
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.56	29,863,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.4	4.55	4.4	4.5	5,043,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	450,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	6.2	6.2	6	6	24,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.4	5.7	5.4	5.7	640,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.8	4.85	4.8	4.85	815,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.34	0.35	0.33	0.35	27,490,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	71,000,000
Ayala Corp.	555	565	555	555	362,950
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	120,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8	8	7.9	8	793,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.9	6.9	5.6	5.7	10,969,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.065	0.0675	0.065	0.0675	9,800,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	38,000
APC Group Inc.	0.32	0.34	0.32	0.34	12,490,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	599,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.48	1.48	9,031,000
Pal Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.55	3.5	3.5	17,000
Batabac Resources & Hldgs	5	5	4.8	4.8	292,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8	4,500
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.3	3.45	3.3	3.35	44,443,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	6.4	7.1	6.4	7.1	1,947,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	4.8	4.95	4.8	4.95	157,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.42	2.55	2.42	2.5	84,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.75	12.75	12.75	12.75	400,400
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	550,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	8	8	7.2	7.2	1,800,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6	471,000
Pacifica	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	16,400,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	2,000,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	8,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	400,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.195	0.195	0.19	0.19	12,280,000
SM Investments Corp.	350	350	350	350	690,700
South China Resources Inc.	1.02	1.18	1.02	1.18	111,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.66	1.68	1.64	1.64	618,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	20,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	16	16.25	15.75	16	13,679,200
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	90,000
Belle Corp.	1.32	1.36	1.32	1.34	12,931,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	310,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.45	0.54	0.45	0.5	20,570,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.9	3.7	3.9	1,385,000
C & P Homes Inc.	2.55	3	2.55	2.8	4,896,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	1.74	1.74	1.7	1.7	110,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.75	0.79	0.75	0.77	43,100,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.82	1.86	1.82	1.86	300,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	200,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.58	1.58	1.56	1.58	36,789,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	80,000
Interport Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	1,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.45	0.47	0.45	0.47	1,350,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.83	0.84	0.82	0.83	2,710,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	100,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	1,300,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.85	3.05	2.85	3	72,294,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4,000
Mrc Allied Ind. Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.7	0.7	3,570,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.9	141,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	19.5	20	19.5	19.75	4,195,300
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.58	0.62	0.58	0.59	7,930,000
SM Development Corp.	3.95	4.05	3.95	4	2,677,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.5	23,513,500
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.66	0.69	0.62	0.65	860,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.145	0.155	0.145	0.15	7,560,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23	23.75	23	23.5	173,800
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	21,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.72	1.72	1.68	1.7	10,708,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1345	1365	1345	1345	31,820
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.7	6.9	6.7	6.7	4,195,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2350	2385	2350	2360	243,890
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.245	0.25	5,820,000
Diversified Fin. Network	4	4	3.8	3.8	62,000
Imperial Res.	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	8,200,000
Ionics Inc.	2.44	2.44	2.3	2.3	171,000
IPVG Corp.	5.4	5.6	5.4	5.6	736,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.055	0.0575	0.055	0.0575	19,100,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0625	0.065	0.06	0.065	42,100,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.66	1.66	1,288,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.04	2.1	2.04	2.06	302,000
Philweb Corp.	0.045	0.047	0.044	0.046	435,600,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.2	88,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	378,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	3.3	3.4	3.2	3.3	7,986,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.9	0.93	0.9	0.92	860,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8	8	8	8	10,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.65	2.8	2.65	2.7	4,130,000
Paxys Inc.	24.75	25.5	24.75	25	666,100
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.48	1.7	1.48	1.68	292,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.1	5.3	5.1	5.2	505,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5	5.5	5	5.3	130,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	60,300,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.5	8.9	8.5	8.7	840,000
Benguet Corp. A	11	11.25	11	11.25	58,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	93,000
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.38	1.4	82,356,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	15,620,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.32	0.34	0.32	0.34	15,290,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.028	0.029	0.028	0.029	140,200,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.033	0.033	0.032	0.033	172,200,000
Omico Corp.	0.021	0.022	0.021	0.022	3,093,900,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.15	17,349,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	17.5	19	17.5	18.75	618,400
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.7	0.7	0.69	0.69	1,250,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.1	1.18	1.1	1.12	5,474,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.31	0.33	0.31	0.33	9,750,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	465,900,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.014	157,000,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	71,700,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.4	5,000

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Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,200,000	-
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	1,300,000	1,100,000
Anvaya Cove Beach and Nature Club	Please Call	-
Baguio Country Club	600,000	540,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	40,000	-
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	60,000	50,000
Camp John Hay	330,000	300,000
Canlubang	550,000	420,000
Capitol Hills	40,000	20,000
Cebu Country Club	1,800,000	1,500,000
Celebrity Sports Club	100,000	90,000
Club Filipino	100,000	90,000
Eagleridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	-
Forest Hills "A"	90,000	75,000
Forest Hills "B"	150,000	-
Forest Hills "C"	200,000	-
Luisita Golf "A"	350,000	270,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	200,000	180,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	250,000	190,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	13,000,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	-	11,600,000
Manila Polo	Please Call	2,700,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	320,000	-
Manila Southwoods "B"	750,000	650,000
Manila Yacht Club	250,000	-
Mimosa (Individual)	220,000	200,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	650,000	600,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	180,000	-
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	350,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "A"	170,000	150,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	290,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "C"	400,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	170,000	140,000
Spa & Lodge	700,000	-
Sta. Elena "A"	1,600,000	1,150,000
Sta. Elena "B"	-	1,800,000
Tagaytay Country Club	320,000	-
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	630,000
Tagaytay Midlands	700,000	620,000
The Palms Country Club "B"	320,000	-
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	-
Valley Golf	200,000	180,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	-	7,300,000

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Alabang Country Club A/B*	1,100,000/Pls. Call*	1,050,000
Alta Vista A/B*/Corp.**	-	300,000/Pls. Call*/475,000**
Baguio Country Club	600,000	-
Camp John Hay	330,000	-
Canlubang Golf	450,000	420,000
Canyon Woods	120,000	-
Capitol Hills	40,000	-
Cebu Country Club	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Celebrity Sports	Pls. Call	-
Club Filipino	90,000	-
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	170,000/Pls. Call*/Pls. Call**	200,000*
Eastridge A/B*	150,000*	-
Evercrest	65,000	-
Fairways & Bluewater	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	90,000/150,000*	120,000*
Luisita Golf B	Pls. Call	350,000
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls. Call	13,000,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	11,600,000
Manila Polo	Pls. Call	2,800,000
Manila Southwoods A/B*	300,000/Pls. Call*	-
Makati Sports Club A	200,000	160,000
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	250,000	-
Metropolitan Club A/B*	150,000	-
Mimosa Ind./C2*/C3**	220,000	Pls. Call/550,000**
Mt. Malarayat A	180,000	-
Orchard A/B*/C**	180,000/Pls. Call*/350,000**	150,000
Punta Fuego	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Quezon City Sports Club	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	80,000/170,000*/250,000**	Pls. Call*
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls. Call	200,000
Royale Tagaytay CC	65,000	-
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/150,000**	100,000*
Splendido Taal	200,000	Pls. Call
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	Pls. Call	-
Subic Golf	180,000	-
Summit Point A	280,000	-
The Palms Country Club	350,000	330,000
Country Club at Tagaytay Highlands	350,000	-
Tagaytay Highlands	700,000	630,000
Tagaytay Midlands	2,000,000	Pls. Call
The Country Club	Pls. Call	-
Tower Club A/B*	150,000/180,000*	-
Valley Golf	-	180,000
Valle Verde Ind.	100,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	8,000,000	7,500,000

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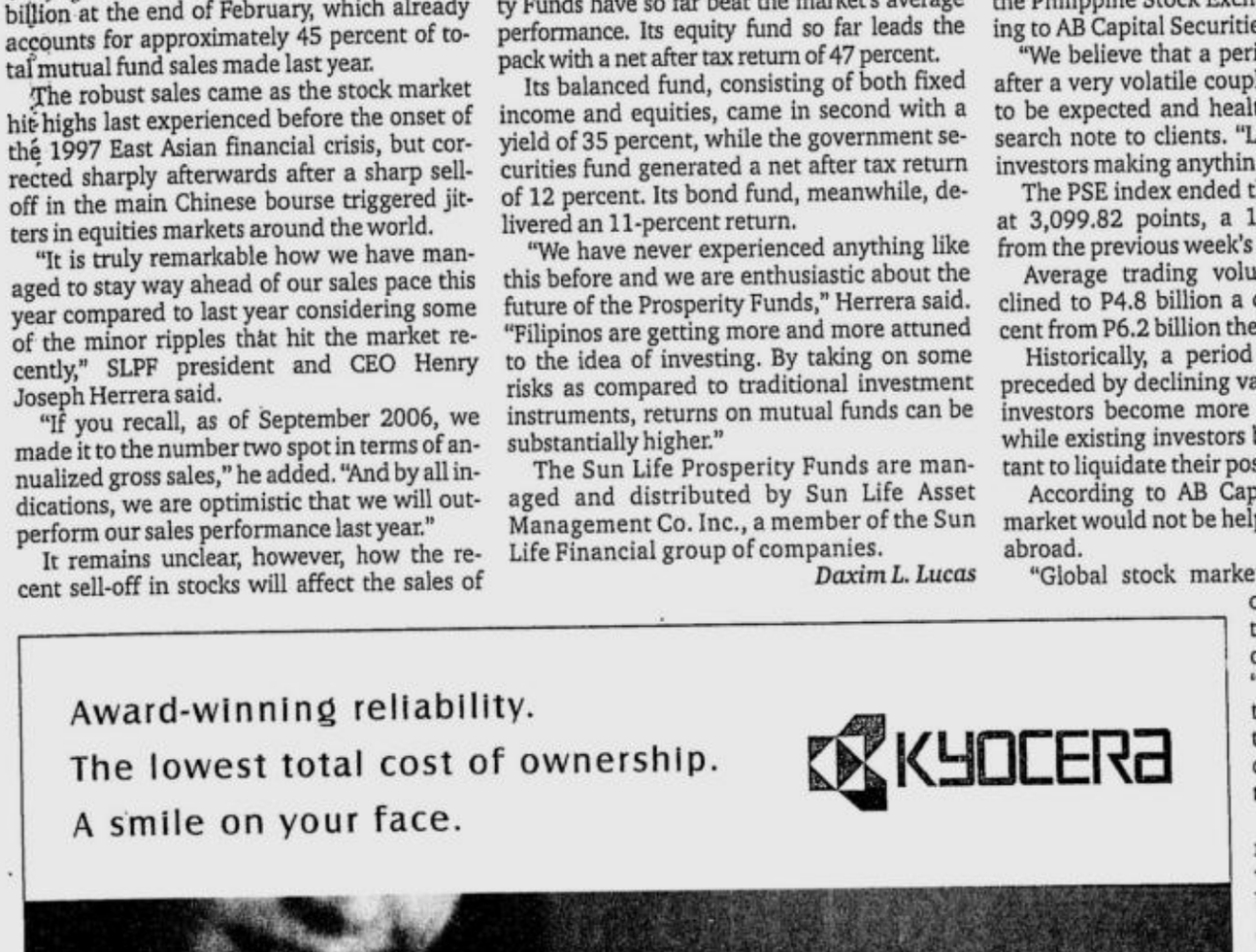

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Power rate cut a boost to RP investment drive

American ecozone firms seen to expand operations

By Abigail L. Ho

THE GOVERNMENT'S RECENT MOVE TO further reduce power rates in economic zones will prompt American investors already present in the country to expand their operations and encourage others to do business here, according to the American Chamber of Commerce (Amcham).

In a letter to President Macapagal-Arroyo, Amcham executive director Robert Sears said the country's relatively high power rates had been one of the biggest deterrents to the entry of new American investments into the country.

"The high price of power in the Philippines has made it more difficult to attract new investments to the Philippines, and even some of our longstanding investors have chosen not to expand here because of power prices," he said.

He said investors, not only from the United States but also from other countries, had always stressed the importance of competition in the energy sector and power rates in keeping their parent firms' confidence in their Philippine operations.

Which was why, he said, the Amcham was "excited" about the government's recent move to reduce electricity costs for manufacturing locators within economic zones.

The Philippine Economic Zone Authority, through a Department of Justice legal opinion, has been given regulatory power over power firms operating within economic zones.

Peza director general Lilia de Lima earlier said this legal opinion removed power companies operating within economic zones from the jurisdiction of the Energy Regulatory Commission.

This should redound to faster approvals of petitions and help reduce power rates to make manufacturing plants in the zones more globally competitive.

Sears said this should help encourage foreign firms to more seriously consider setting up shop in the Philippines.

The benefits of this DOJ opinion, he said, would be far reaching.

"We thank you for responding to this recommendation (of the business sector) favorably through expanding the applicability of the regulatory authority of Peza to all economic zones so that the benefits of lower power prices can be enjoyed by many more of our member manufacturing, service and logistic firms," he said.

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PELAC Global Bond Fund	1.1795	1.1807
PELAC Peso Fixed Income Fund	1.0195	1.0251
PELAC Peso Equity Fund	1.1777	1.2305

These investment funds are specific to variable life insurance contracts and are not considered mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.
*Fund prices are net of transaction costs

Barclays sees peso hitting 46:$1 by end of '07

By Doris C. Dumlao

GLOBAL INVESTMENT BANK BARCLAYS Capital sees the peso sustaining its uptrend to hit 46 to a dollar by the end of the year, despite election-related pressures and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' liberalization of capital outflow restrictions.

Nicholas Bibby, macro strategist at the UK-based investment bank, said in a commentary dated March 1 that the BSP would also have room to cut its overnight policy rates by 50 basis points by the second quarter, but would likely reverse the course and begin to tighten monetary policy toward the end of the year to protect its 2008 inflation target.

The BSP has set an inflation rate goal of 4 percent for 2008. Having modified its targeting system to allow more leeway in evaluating and managing consumer price stability, this mid-point inflation target range implies a wider range of 3-5 percent versus the 4-5 percent goal for 2007.

Bibby said the monetary tightening would be achieved by scrapping the tiering system and moving back to a single overnight deposit rate of 7 percent, from the current 7.5 percent.

Since Nov. 2, the BSP has been offering under the tiering system an interest rate of 7.5 percent only for the first P5 billion of a bank's overnight money; 5.5 percent for placements in excess of P5 billion up to P10 billion; and, 3.5 percent for anything in excess of P10 billion.

As with the rest of emerging Asia, the Philippines has seen a marked rise in its balance of payments surplus over the last 12 months alongside a build-up in its foreign reserves to record highs, Bibby noted.

"Apart from letting the peso appreciate, the BSP's solution has been to introduce a three-tiered overnight deposit rates for commercial banks in order to lessen the costs of this excess liquidity on its balance sheet. The BSP also announced the liberalization of capital account transactions for domestic institutions," the Barclays economist said.

Starting April 1, commercial banks can stockpile foreign exchange for their own account equivalent to 20 percent of unimpaired capital or $50 million, whichever is lower. Before this, the allowable net position is much tighter at 2.5 percent of unimpaired capital or $5 million.

The BSP has also raised the outward investment limit for domestic companies without requiring its permission to $12 million from $6 million, while purchases of dollars by individuals for non-commercial purposes, including offshore travel, will likewise be expanded to $10,000 from $5,000.

Bibby said the local currency was supported by the strong external payments position, largely due to the widening current account surplus that was boosted by robust remittances from overseas workers.

"Despite the possibility of a correction in the run-up to May's mid-term congressional elections, we believe that the peso will continue to appreciate on a trend basis to hit 46:$1 by year end," he said.

But the economist said the strong domestic liquidity caused by the rising current account surplus was not being recycled given the banking system's subdued lending mood over the last five years.

"This is due to a combination of the high level of nonperforming loans, weak domestic demand and the failure of the property market to fully adjust. Philippine banks have directed their excess funds toward the bond market, which has led to a general downtrend in yields," he said.

Gov't support for MRT plan cited

CIVIC GROUP EDSA PARA SA MASA CITED the support thrown by various government agencies for the expansion and extension of the Light Rail Transit system along Edsa.

The group specifically lauded statements from the Department of Transportation and Communications, Light Rail Transit Authority and the Office of the Luzon Urban Beltway supporting the increase in train capacity of Edsa Metro Rail Transit-3 and its connection to Light Rail Transit-1 in Caloocan.

The group earlier urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to implement plans for the Edsa MRT expansion and extension citing the rapid rise in patronage and the need to link up the two systems.

The group earlier noted the efficiency and convenience of the Edsa MRT service but warned that the system might not be able to cope with the huge increase in daily ridership.

"We commend the DOTC for the efficient management and operations of the Edsa but we have to admit it, there is a serious limitation to the present capacity of the system, the group said.

In a statement, the group said the interest expressed by the three agencies to undertake the extension of the Edsa MRT "is a positive sign that the aspiration of Edsa MRT commuters will be fulfilled in the near future."

RP exports to India rose by 38.7% in '06

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE COUNTRY'S MERCHANdise exports to India rose 38.72 percent to $119.5 million in 2006 amid efforts between New Delhi and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to revive talks on a possible free trade pact.

Data from the Bureau of External Trade Promotions, an agency of the Department of Trade and Industry, show that industrial goods made up 68.4 percent of the total export to India last year at $81.7 million.

Industrial manufactures sent to this country included electronics; machinery, transport equipment, apparatuses and parts; metal products, construction materials, chemicals and related goods.

Consumer manufactures came second at 20.7 percent of the total free on board value or $24.7 million. These included garments, housewares, holiday décor, toys and dolls, fashion accessories, furniture, wood products, footwear, gift ware and similar items.

Resource-based products—including coconut and mineral products, seaweed and carrageenan, marble, textile yarns and non-metallic minerals—accounted for 8.3 percent of exports at about $10 million.

Processed and fresh foods and mineral products were also shipped out, as well as some merchandise under "special transactions."

Last January, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry said trade between the two countries was maturing into the "tipping point," considering that two-way trade was now at about $750 million compared to $250 million in the past years.

PCCI said the Philippines-India Business Council, which held meetings in the run-up to and in the wake of the Asean + India Summit in Cebu in January, would devise a long term framework to step up trade.

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DOE to hold another contracting round in '07

Gov't hopes to award contracts in September

By Abigail L. Ho

ENCOURAGED BY THE HIGH INvestor interest in the Philippine Energy Contracting Round (PECR) 2006, the Department of Energy expects to hold another contracting round for petroleum, geothermal and coal areas before the end of the year.

Energy Undersecretary Guillermo Balce said almost every block offered under PECR 2006 had at least one interested party, with most of them having more than two potential investors.

"We want to hurry with this PECR so we can have another round right after this. We expect to award PECR 2006 contracts by September so can have the next round immediately after that," he said in a recent interview.

Under the PECR 2006, interested investors could bid for the right to explore and develop nine petroleum blocks, 14 coal prospects and three geothermal sites located all over the country.

For petroleum exploration, the DOE has identified nine areas spanning 71,357.3 sq. km. for development, including Cagayan, Central Luzon, two blocks in Mindoro-Cuyo, three blocks in East Palawan, Visayan Basin and Agusan-Davao.

In 2005, only four oil and gas areas were offered to prospective investors, two of which had yet to be formally awarded as these were still awaiting Malacañang approval.

For coal, the DOE is offering 14 sites with a total resource potential of 421 million metric tons (MT) for exploration, development and production.

Balce said in an earlier interview that each site would be composed of three blocks, with each block spanning 1,000 hectares.

These coal sites arein Quezon, Negros Occidental, Cebu, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Agusan del Sur, Davao Oriental and Zamboanga Sibugay.

During the PECR 2005, no bidder qualified to get an operating contract for any of the seven areas offered.

For the geothermal sector, the DOE has identified three areas for exploration, development and direct utilization for power generation and other geothermal applications.

These areas, with a combined potential of around 100 megawatts (MW), are located in Mabini in Batangas, Biliran in Biliran Province and Amacan in Compostela Valley.

The Philippines is the world's second largest geothermal power producer with a total installed capacity of 1,931 MW.

PHILIPPINE Franchise Association chair emeritus Samie Lim (left) and Trade Undersecretary Zorayda welcome President Macapagal-Arroyo to the annual Franchise Excellence Awards held at Crowne Plaz President led in giving out the awards to this year's winners: Hall of Fame/Outstanding Filipino Franchi Year—Pancake House Restaurant (large scale category) and Julie's Franchise Corp. (medium scale); O Franchise of the Year—SeaOil Philippines (retail category) and Reyes Hair International (service categ Filipino Franchise of the Year—Waffle Time (kiosk); International Master Franchise of the Year (large s Corp.; and Franchisees of the Year Carolyn Sy-Francisco (Julie's Bakeshop) and Ma. Theresa Laus (Max

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SIMPLIFIED SYSTEM

Data center solution f

By Riza T. Olchondra

IBM PHILIPPINES AND US-BASED Emerson Network Power have jointly developed a data center in a rack or DCIR solution to simplify the establishment of data centers for small and medium enterprises.

The DCIR solution—which enables companies to put their servers, switches and related peripherals in one rolling rack—is distributed by Lamco International in the Philippines.

Company officials said in a briefing that the system was first launched in the Philippines and it would be made available to the rest of Southeast Asia in a couple of months.

The new DCIR solution enables users to reduce the complexity and time required when deploying IBM blade servers for any working environment, by taking care of the mission-critical physical infrastructure issues that they may typically face. It also enables user to save half of their horizontal space and half their vertical space compared to other racks.

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Banks expect to earn big in home mortgage lending

BANKS EXPECT A BOOM IN THEIR HOME mortgage lending, as well as a significant upgrade of their asset quality, following a recent Supreme Court ruling which eased foreclosure proceedings on real estate used as loan collateral.

Bankers Association of the Philippines president Ramon Sy, in a letter to Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno dated March 7, thanked the high court in amending the procedures in extra-judicial or judicial foreclosure of real estate mortgages.

"With the prospects of an early resolution of disputes arising out of foreclosure cases, I can anticipate a renewed lending interest, particularly in home mortgages," Sy said. "Brisk real estate business is a strong impetus for growth in our economy."

In a recent en banc ruling, the high court passed a resolution prohibiting the issuance of temporary restraining order or injunction against the foreclosure of a property based on claim that the mortgage has been paid or that the borrower has not been delinquent in his payments.

The high court said the application for an injunction should be verified and supported by evidence of payment.

The Supreme Court also said that no TRO must be issued on complaints on loan interest— unless the debtor pays the mortgage with interest of at least 12 percent per year on the principal obligation. *Doris C. Dumlao*

or SMEs launched

"We believe the DCIR solution is ttractive to small- and medium-ized businesses in the Philippines, ho are considering IBM blade de-loyment," IBM Philippines general anager James Velasquez said.

"Many organizations in the Philip-ines will benefit greatly from the CIR solution, specifically designed ith built-in power, cooling and anagement capabilities within a ack, for the rapid deployment of lade servers and all IT networking pplications as they gear up to com-ete more competitively in the world market," said Emerson Philippines general manager Laurence Chan.

He said businesses were always facing real challenges arising from energy costs and SMEs would find the DCIR particularly useful for roll-out in dusty facilities with little or no air-conditioning.

As for Lamco, assistant vice president Jason Lim said the distributor's partnership with key vendors like IBM and Emerson "will ultimately benefit end-users and businesses in the Philippines."

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Pag-IBIG sets another bond offer worth P700M

Proceeds will be used to acquire 50,000 housing units

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE STATE-OWNED HOME DEVELOPment Mutual Fund, popularly known as the Pag-IBIG Fund, will offer to retail investors P700 million in five-year bonds over the next two weeks—a follow-up to last week's oversubscribed auction where it sold P2 billion worth of bonds at a record-low coupon rate.

Pag-IBIG Fund's auction of "Kaunlaran ng Bayan Housing Bonds" last March 7 generated P5.5 billion worth of tenders, nearly thrice the offering size, allowing the housing agency to issue the P2-billion five-year bonds at 5 percent per annum. The coupon rate was below the prevailing market benchmarks, and the lowest for any debt issuance by a government-owned and -controlled corporation.

"The vibrant response of the market to our latest housing bonds is overwhelming," Pag-IBIG president Romero Quimbo said. "Large private institutions like banks and pension funds/workers' provident funds were among our major investors."

He added that the latest issue "is a validation of investors' continuing trust in the Pag-IBIG Fund."

"We have been offering bonds in the market since 2000, all of which, I am pleased to say, were oversubscribed," Quimbo said.

As of auction date, the secondary market rate for comparative five-year Treasury bonds was recorded at 5.82 percent.

But while the Fund has initially awarded the total issue size of P2 billion on the day of auction, the amount will be subject to a 35-percent "clawback," which means around P700 million will still be offered during a limited retail period.

The "clawback" provision, an innovation by high-yielding bond issuers in the 1990s, means that the issuer has the option to redeem a specified fraction of the original issuance at a specified date using proceeds from a new issuance.

The underwriters of the offering are state-owned banks Development Bank of the Philippines and Land Bank of the Philippines.

"Private individuals like Pag-IBIG members and overseas workers should not despair as we will also give them the opportunity to invest in the Kaunlaran ng Bayan Housing Bonds," Quimbo said.

"We urge our members to quickly take advantage of the retail offering from March 14 to 20," Quimbo said. "Other developers and insurance companies who were not able to participate in the bidding will be entertained from March 19 to 20."

While institutional investors had to shell out hundreds of millions of pesos for the bonds to get a 5-percent yield on their investments, he said individual bondholders would get to enjoy the same interest rate when they invest an amount as small as P10,000.

Pag-IBIG Fund is currently the country's leading source of shelter financing.

The fresh infusion of funds estimated at P25 billion for this year, including the P2-billion housing bond flotation, will help finance the acquisition of some 50,000 housing units worth an average of P500,000 each.

Quimbo said the fund-raising activity had shown how the government and the private sector could work hand in hand in licking the country's housing problem.

"Government recognizes that it cannot do it alone," Quimbo said. "It needs to tap private sector funds. Our task in government is to primarily provide a mechanism for fund sourcing that can be trusted by the private sector."

Vice President Noli de Castro, the government's housing czar, commended Pag-IBIG Fund for undertaking this innovative fund sourcing efforts.

"This latest Housing Bonds issue should help ensure the steady flow of funds for housing," De Castro said. "With major housing allies like the Pag-IBIG Fund, the government will definitely be able to face the issue of homelessness head on."

At yearend 2006, Pag-IBIG Fund's total assets amounted to P191.55 billion, up by 7.43 percent from the P178.30 billion posted the previous year.

The Fund also chalked up its record-high net income of P7.7 billion last year.

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Bohemia St., BROOKSIDE HILLS SUBD. Cainta, Antipolo City(near MERALCO)
Min Bid Price: P 850,099

LAS PIÑAS

AB_LSP002 RSDL LOT w/ 2 STRY RSDL BLDG.
L.A. 331 sqm F.A. 386.28 sqm.
Gem Road, PILLAR VILLAGE (back of SM-Southmall)
Min Bid Price: P 4,050,099

MANILA

AB_MNL001 RSDL CONDO UNIT
F.A. 157.94sqm
STA. ELENA CONDO,
Sta Elena St., Binondo (near New Divisoria Shopping Center)
Min Bid Price: P 3,600,099

MARIKINA

AB_MAR003 RSDL w/ COMM'L LOT w/ 2 STRY BLDG.
L.A. 293 sqm. F.A. 160.2 sqm.
Bonifacio Ave. Cor. Lot 91 BARRIO BARANGCA (near River Bank Mall)
Min Bid Price: P 2,550,099

MUNTINLUPA

AB_MUN004 RSDL LOT w/ 2 STRY BLDG. w/ DRIVER'S QUARTER & BAMBOO HOUSE
L.A. 300 sqm F.A. 250.10 sqm
Ipil St., DOÑA ROSARIO HTS (near Britanny Bay Village)
Min Bid Price: P 2,720,099

ORTIGAS, PASIG

AB_PSG005 RSDL CONDO UNIT w/ PRKG LOT
F.A. 210.14 sqm.
RARC CHATEAU CONDO., Onynx cor. Sapphire & Garnet Road, Ortigas Complex
Min Bid Price: P 8,075,099

QUEZON CITY

AB_QCB006 RSDL CONDO UNIT
TEMPUS PLACE CONDOMINIUM II
Makatarungan Road, Diliman (near Q.C. Hall)

Floor Area	Min Bid Price
125.95 sqm.	P 3,400,699
60.52 sqm.	P 1,634,099
102.01 sqm.	P 2,754,299
126.85 sqm.	P 3,424,999

AB_QCB007 RSDL LOT w/ BUNGALOW
L.A. 2,000 sqm. F.A. 449 sqm.
Pasacola St., BRGY. NAGKAISANG NAYON Novaliches (near Doña Rosario Subd.)
Min Bid Price: P 7,200,099

AB_QCB008 2 ADJ. RSDL LOT w/ BUNGALOW
L.A. 469 sqm
Grecio & Thadeus St., FRANCISVILLE
San Bartolome, Novaliches (near Rainbow Homes)
Min Bid Price: P 2,550,099

TANAY, RIZAL

AB_RZL047 COMM'L LOT w/ 3 STRY COMM'L BLDG
L.A. 368 sqm F.A. 1,078 sqm.
Yujuico St., Poblacaion TANAY(near Jollibee)
Min Bid Price: P 6,800,099

TAYTAY, RIZAL

AB_RZL046 RSDL LOTS w/ 2 STRY RSDL BLDG
L.A. 560 sqm. (near NEBA)
Milan St., SAN FRANCISCO VILLAGE, Munoz, Taytay
Min Bid Price: P 2,400,099

AB_RZL048 AGRI-IND'L LOT w/ POULTRY HOUSE, OFFICE w/ GARAGE, RSDL / OFFICE BLDG w/BASEMENT
L.A. 38,044 sqm
Emilio Dela Paz St., Maybancal Morong, Taytay (near Xeva Farm)
Min Bid Price: P 6,800,099

LUZON

BATANGAS
Text 09175443063

AB_BAT011 RSDL /AGRI LOT w/ SEVERAL POULTRY HOUSE & AN OLD RSDL HOUSE
L.A. 10,890 sqm. F.A. 200 sqm.
Barrio Dagatan, San Jose, BAUAN (near Church plaza)
Min Bid Price: P 3,400,099

AB_BAT012 AGRICULTURAL LOT
L.A. 3,941 sqm.
Barrio Tinurik, TANAUAN (near Tanauan Public market)
Min Bid Price: P 945,899

BULACAN
Text 09273333733

AB_BUL013 IND'L / RSDL LOT w/ 2 STRY WAREHOUSE & 3 SINGLE STRY BLDG.
L.A. 1,579.00 sqm F.A. 917.47 sqm
Along Muntinlupa Road, Barrio Duhat, BOCAUE (near Marilao Exit)
Min Bid Price: P 5,400,099

AB_BUL014 IND'L LOT w/ WAREHOUSE
L.A. 970 sqm. F.A. 930 sqm
RIS INDUSTRIAL SUBD., Barrio Tabe, Guiguinto (near Guiguinto Public market)
Min Bid Price: P 6,300,099

AB_BUL015 IND'L LOT w/ WAREHOUSE
L.A. 860 sqm F.A. 826 sqm
RIS INDUSTRIAL SUBD., Barrio Tabe, Guiguinto (near Guiguinto Public market)
Min Bid Price: P5,850,099

AB_BUL016 RSDL 2 ADJ. LOT w/ 2 DILAPIDATED RSDL UNITS
L.A.1,521 sqm F.A. 264 sqm.
Bayugo Road, MEYCAUAYAN (in front of Brgy. Bayugo Brgy. Hall)
Min. Bid Price: P 4,240,099

CAGAYAN
Text 09195829178

AB_CAG056 RSDL/ IND'L LOT
L.A. 11,403.00 sqm.
Barrio Nagalisan, SOLANA (beside Mangalisan Elem. Schl)
Min. Bid Price: P 2,250,099

AB_CAG057 IND'L. LOT/ WAREHOUSE
L.A. 21,152.00sqm F.A. 1,200.00sqm
Along National Highway, Barrio Lingu, SOLANA (beside Shell Gas station)
Min. Bid Price: P 9,000,099

AB_CAG058 2 STRY RSDL HOUSE w/ TERRACE
L.A. 752.00sqm.
Bassig St., TUGUEGARAO CITY (near Tuguegarao Domestic Airport)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,530,099

AB_CAG059 RSDL LOT w/ BUNGALOW
L.A. 387.00sqm. F.A. 129 sqm.
Grape St., TUGUEGARAO CITY (near Tuguegarao Domestic Airport)
Min. Bid Price: P 630,099

AB_CAG060 RSDL LOT w/ RESIDENTIAL BLDG.
L.A. 2,030.00sqm.
F.A 126.00sqm.
Along National Highway, Bo. Ruyu TUGUEGARAO CITY (beside Victory liner terminal)
Min. Bid Price: P 9,760,099

CAVITE
Text 09189048230

AB_CVT017 RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,000 sqm.
RODEO COUNTRYSIDE ESTATE, Barrio Esperanza, Alfonso (farm lot near Tagaytay)
Min Bid Price: P 1,200,099

AB_CVT019 RSDL LOT
L.A. 444 sqm.
Gomez St., AYALA SOUTHVALE VILLAGE, Phase I, Molino, Bacoor (near Alabang Town Center)
Min Bid Price: P 7,192,899

AB_CVT020 RSDL LOT w/ BUNGALOW TYPE RSDL BLDG w/ GARAGE
L.A. 374 sqm F.A.200 sqm.
Malagasang Road, Malagasang II-B, BACOOR (near Dasma Town proper)
Min Bid Price: P 2,700,099

AB_CVT021 RSDL LOT w\ 3-STRY RSDL BLDG w/ ROOF DECK & RADIO ROOM
L.A. 120 sqm. F.A. 413 sqm
Ykal St. ANDREAVILLE EXEC. Salitran, Dasmarinas (near Orchard & De la Salle)
Min Bid Price: P 3,400,099

AB_CVT022 RSDL LOT w/ 2 STRY RSDL BLDG
L.A. 150 sqm. F.A. 289 sqm.
Dona Anding St., MARTIN DE PORRES SUBD.Bayan Luma, Imus (very near Imus market)
Min Bid Price: P 2,070,099

AB_CVT023 RSDL LOT w/ SINGLE STRY RSDL BLDG.
L.A.288 sqm F.A. 144 sqm.
Sol P. Bella corner Topacio St. Bayan Luma, IMUS (near Imus Town proper)
Min Bid Price: P 1,955,099

AB_CVT024 RSDL LOT w/ STRY RSDL/COMM'L BLDG w/ ROOFDECK
L.A. 159.30 sqm. F.A. 513 sqm.
Bukandala, Provincial Road, MARICRIS HOMES Alapan I, Imus (near Robinson Imus)
Min Bid Price: P 4,000,099

ILOCOS NORTE

AB_ILN061 RSDL./IND'L LOT w/ BUNGALOW
L.A. 4,916.00sqm.
Cabungaan South, LAOAG CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 2,550,099

AB_ILN062 RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,469 00sqm.
Camangaan, LAOAG CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 998,999

LAGUNA
Text 09178054175

AB_LGN025 RSDL LOT w/ 2 STRY RSDL BLDG.
L.A. 222 sqm. F.A. 302 sqm.
KATAPATAN MUTUAL HOMES SUBD., Banay-Banay, Cubuyao (in front of Pamantasan ng Cabuyao)
Min Bid Price: P 2,700,099

AB_LGN026 VACANT RSDL LOT
L.A. 1615 sqm.
Along Unnamed Bo. Road, Brgy. Libis Lalakay, LOS BAÑOS (near Splash Mountain Resort)
Min Bid Price: P 2,720,099

AB_LGN027 RSDL LOT w/ RESTHOUSE
L.A. 2,092 sqm.
Bo. Batay Hangin, CALAUAN (near Calauan Town Proper)
Min Bid Price: P 10,400,099

AB_LGN028 IND'L LOT w/ 1 STRY BLDG.
L.A. 483 sqm. F.A. 90 sqm.
Along National Road, Brgy Dayap CALAUAN (beside Anita Rice Mill)
Min Bid Price: P 900,099

AB_LGN029 RSDL LOT w/ BUNGALOW RSDL BLDG.
L.A. 180 sqm. F.A. 180 sqm
Burgos St., PACITA COMPLEX, San Pedro (near Community Hospital)
Min Bid Price: P 1,980,099

AB_LGN030 RSDL LOT
L.A. 222 sqm.
SOUTH CITY HOMES, Calaboso, Binan (near La Consolacion College)
Min Bid Price: P 585,099

AB_LGN033 RSDL LOT w/ BUNGALOW
L.A. 346 sqm. F.A. 105 sqm.
Bagong, Bayan, STA. CRUZ (front of Laguna Transit)
Min Bid Price: P 1,105,099

AB_LGN034 RICE MILL
L.A. 1239 sqm.
Rizal St., Pila, LAGUNA (beside Pila Public market)
Min Bid Price: P 2,790,099

AB_LGN035 RSDL LOT
L.A. 330 sqm.
ATDRAMM SUBD., Brgy Callios, Sta Cruz (near Brgy. Callos Elem. School)
Min Bid Price: P 594,099

AB_LGN036 RSDL LOT
L.A. 2,799 sqm.
Brgy. Del Remedio, SAN PABLO CITY (near Qualibrant Marketing & BC Motor)
Min Bid Price: P 3,780,099

NUEVA ECIJA
Text 09156002733

AB_NE116 RSDL LOT w/ 2 STRY STRUCTURE
L.A. 193.00sqm
F.A. 386.00sqm.
Magsaysay District, CABANATUAN CITY (near Wesleyan University)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,080,099

AB_NE118 IND'L/AGRO LAND
L.A. 40,000.00sqm.
Barrio Macatbong, CABANATUAN CITY (near Hunter Valley Resort)
Min. Bid Price: P 3,400,099

AB_NE119 RSDL/IND'L LOT w/ BLDG & WAREHOUSE
L.A. 999 00sqm
F.A. 712.75sqm.
Sanclangco St., CABANATUAN CITY (near McDonalds Sanclangco)
Min. Bid Price: P 3,400,099

AB_NE120 RSDL LOT
L.A. 10,000 sqm
Daan Sarille & Carosilisan Rd. Bo.Valde Fuente, CABANATUAN CITY (near Maranatha School)
Min Bid Price: P 7,200,099

AB_NE162 RSDL COMM'L LOT w/WAREHOUSE & GARAGE
L.A. 526 sqm.
Gen. Luna, CABANATUAN CITY
Min Bid Price: P 4,320,099

AB_NE122 RSDL/ IND'L LOT w/ WAREHOUSE, OFFICE &SOLAR DRIER
L.A. 5,252 sqm F.A.530.75 sqm
Sto. Tomas, PENARANDA (near Plaza Peñaranda)
Min Bid Price: P 5,400,099

AB_NE124 RSDL LOT w/ 1- STRY RSDL BLDG w/ COMMERCIAL STALL
L.A. 2,048 sqm F.A. 214.25 sqm
Bo. Sta. Clara, QUEZON
Min Bid Price: P 960,099

AB_NE125 RSDL / IND'L LOT w/ 1 STRY RSDL BLDG
L.A. 10,001 sqm. F.A. 498.4 sqm
Bo Julo & Sto. Cristo, SAN ANTONIO (near Town proper of San Antonio)
Min Bid Price: P 2,550,099

AB_NE126 RSDL LOT w/ 1 STRY & 3 STRY RSDL HOUSES, 3 PIG PENS & WAREHOUSE
L.A.4,556 sqm F.A.1,272 sqm
Calaba, SAN ISIDRO (near San Roque Church)
Min Bid Price: P 3,600,099

AB_NE128 RSDL LOT w/ 1 STRY BLDG w/ BASEMENT
L.A. 1,044 sqm
Sto Rosario, STO. DOMINGO (near Sicsican market)
Min Bid Price: P 1,350,099

AB_NE131 RSDL LOT w/ POUTRY HOUSE
L.A. 5,960 sqm
BARRIO LA TORRE (near La Torre Elem. School)
Min Bid Price: P 990,099

AB_NE132 RSDL LOT
L.A.1,652 sqm
Bo San Pascual,TALAVERA (near Sicsican market)
Min Bid Price: P 900,099

AB_NE133 RSDL/ COMM'L LOT w/ 2 STRY RSDL BLDG & STOCK HOUSE
L.A.482.59 sqm F.A. 252 sqm
Bo San Pascual, TALAVERA (near Sicsican market)
Min Bid Price: P 1,080,099

AB_NE135 RSDL / IND'L LOT w/ 1 STRY RSDL HOUSE
Bo San Pascual, TALAVERA

Lot Area	Min. Bid Price
5,349sqm	P 2,000,099
199sqm	P 2,000,099

QUEZON PROVINCE
Text 09209222495

AB_QP142 RSDL / COMM'L LOT w/2-STRY WORKING AREA & WAITING SHED
L.A. 1,694 sqm. F.A. 575.15 sqm.
A. Bonifacio St., GUMACA (former BLTB station/near Gumaca Comm'l Area)
Min Bid Price: P 9,000,099

AB_QP143 COMM'L LOT W/ 2-STRY BLDG & ROOFTOP
L.A. 419 sqm F.A.1672.46 sqm
Lucena, Quezon Ave. cor. Leon Guinto, LUCENA CITY (near Lucena Capitol & OPM Bldg.)
Min Bid Price: P 19,000,099

AB_QP145 RSDL / IND'L LOT w/ RICE MILL,CANOPY, 2 STRY RSDL BLDG & STORAGE
L.A. 1,446 sqm F.A. 473.5 sqm
Diversion Road, Bo. Ilayang Mayao, LUCENA CITY (near Lucena Grand Terminal & Metropolis Subd.)
Min Bid Price: P2,380,099

AB_QP146 COMM'L RSDL LOT
L.A. 944 sqm.
Quezon Ave cor. P. Paterno St., TAYABAS (near St. John Bosco Academy & Tayabas Church)
Min Bid Price: P 8,550,099

TARLAC
Text 09163086112

AB_TAR148 RSDL LOT w/ 2-STRY FACTORY WAREHOUSE & BUNGALOW
L.A.. 729 sqm. F.A. 64 sqm.
Edwards St. San Sebastian Village Bo. San Roque, SAN RAFAEL
Min Bid Price: P 2,136,299

AB_TAR151 RSDL LOT w/ WAREHOUSE w/ EXT.
L.A. 1,400 sqm F.A. 256 sqm.
Barrio Tibag, TARLAC CITY (front Zaraga Subd.)
Min Bid Price: P 520,099

AB_TAR152 AGRICULTURAL LOT
L.A. 13,530 sqm
Barrio Palacpac, VICTORIA
Min Bid Price: P 1,217,799

PALAWAN

AB_PAL155 RSDL LOT
L.A. 8,156 sqm
Santol Road cor. San Jose St., PUERTO PRINCESSA CITY
Min Bid Price: P 1,800,099

AB_PAL156 RSDL LOT
L.A. 3,289 sqm
Brgy. Bancao-Bancao, PUERTO PRINCESSA CITY (near Palawan Polytechnic College)
Min Bid Price: P 2,970,099

AB_PAL157 RSDL LOT
L.A. 600 sqm
Brgy. Bancao-Bancao, PUERTO PRINCESSA CITY (near Palawan Polytechnic College)
Min Bid Price: P 810,099

AB_PAL158 ADJ. LOTS w/ NIPA HUT
L.A. 5,000 sqm
Manalo Extension, PUERTO PRINCESSA CITY (near Palawan Polytechnic College)
Min Bid Price: P 6,750,099

AB_PAL159 RSDL LOT
L.A.1,000 sqm
Brgy. San Jose, PUERTO PRINCESSA CITY (near Puerto Princessa Memorial Hospital)
Min Bid Price: P 340,099

AB_PAL160 COMM'L LOT
L.A.1,260 sqm
Along Rizal Ave., Camarigan, PUERTO PRINCESSA CITY
Min Bid Price: P 8,360,099

ZAMBALES

AB_ZAM153 RSDLCOMM'L LOT W/ 3 STRY BLDG
L.A. 1,396 sqm F.A. 1,691.70 sqm.
Fendler cor Perimeter St., East Tapinac, OLONGAPO (near James Gordon Hospital)
Min Bid Price: P 34,200,099

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BSP considers easing FCDU restrictions

TETANGCO

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPinas is studying a new proposal from the Chamber of Thrift Banks to ease restrictions on foreign currency deposit unit (FCDU) transactions.

In a briefing after the CTB's annual convention on Friday, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the banking regulator would consider allowing banks to invest in long-term foreign currency debt securities.

Under existing regulations, he said the FCDU units of banks should cover their liabilities with assets in the form of loans and securities that are readily marketable and carry shorter maturities.

"But the market has changed now," Tetangco said. "Even if it's a security with a cover of one year, it can easily be traded, bought and sold in the market. So, the idea of being able to provide a cover that's liquid enough can also be met by that, since these are securities with longer maturity but you can easily trade it."

The forex cover requires banks to match all foreign currency liabilities with various eligible assets of the same amount, to discourage overexposure to foreign currency risk.

Currently, the BSP allows only the following items as assets eligible as forex cover: foreign currency deposits with the BSP; short term foreign currency deposits with foreign banks, offshore banking units and other FCDUs; short-term foreign currency loans authorized by the BSP except those classified by the BSP as bad or uncollectible debts; investments in foreign currency-denominated debt instruments, which are of short-term maturities and are readily marketable; foreign currency notes and coins on hand; foreign currency checks and other cash items; foreign currency swaps; foreign currency interests receivables; and, government securities purchased under resale agreements.

Recently, the BSP had also accepted a proposal from commercial banks to use all profitable hedging tools or derivatives position as part of the 100-percent foreign exchange cover for the the foreign currency liabilities.

In this case, Tetangco said the BSP was willing to allow banks to hold long-term securities as forex cover.

"There's now active (bond) trading and prices are regularly available from an exchange, from a broker or a dealer, so we're studying this and it's really worth considering," he said.

During the CTB convention on Friday, newly elected president Alfredo Yao said the thrift bank sector, which is focused on small and medium enterprises, would continue to support reforms to boost the banking system.

"We shall continue to support the legislation of banking or financial courts for the prompt settlement of financial issues," Yao said.

"We will also lay the groundwork for the establishment of a CTB Training Institute that will professionalize members and boost the infrastructure for a non-degree course in thrift banking," he added.

Yao said the CTB would also work to allow more members to avail of guarantees from the state-owned Home Guarantee Corp. in order to stimulate more home mortgage lending.

Doris C. Dumlao

NTC sets rules on consumer protection

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNIcations Commission (NTC) has set draft rules for keeping data logs of subscribers' voice and non-voice traffic as part of an effort to boost consumer protection.

The tentative guidelines, which were released Friday, will be subjected to public hearings next month, the regulator said.

Under the draft rules, telcos should retain the origin, destination, date, time and duration of post-paid telephone services for two months. Similar data for prepaid services will be kept for up to six months, or as requested by the NTC in connection with pending complaints.

Related consumer protection guidelines state that subscribers' data should be protected and that the subscriber should be given access to emergency numbers at no extra charge.

Consumers may not be charged for any service that was not subscribed to or was interrupted through no fault of the subscriber. A subscriber can only be charged according to the rates, terms and conditions agreed upon, and has the right to opt out from any service without a penalty within 30 days from the start of use.

Also, no telephone, Internet, broadcast or cable service provider-initiated change may take effect against any subscriber without prior notice and unless allowed by applicable laws.

The NTC said all providers and users of telecommunications services will be covered by the rules. Service providers are required to designate at least one representative to provide recorded information to the NTC in connection with pending consumer complaints.

The regulator added that the One Stop Public Assistance Center or OSPAC of the regulator's main office and regional offices will facilitate consumer complaints.

The hearing on the draft consumer protection guidelines will be held on April 10 at the NTC's main office in Quezon City. The hearing on the draft rules for data log retention will be held on April 12, also at the NTC's main office.

Luzon gets P220B in infra deals

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—AT LEAST 10 new projects worth P20 billion have been added to the Luzon Urban Beltway super region.

This increased the total infrastructure investments in four regions to P220 billion, said LUB chief Edgardo Pamintuan.

Pamintuan said the additional projects being coordinated by the LUB are the Daang Hari-South Luzon Expressway Line Road, Cavite-Laguna (Cala) North-SLEX (Stage 1), C6 Lakeshore Expressway, North Luzon East Expressway (NLEE), Southern Tagalog Arterial Road (Star) 2, Edsa Rehabilitation Project, SouthRail Project Phase 1-A, LRT Line 1 Naia Connector, MRT 7, and the MWSS Angat Water Utilization Aqueduct.

He said Secretary Cerge Remonde, chief of the Presidential Management Staff, had informed him that the LUB would oversee these new projects, which leaders in the private sector identified during the National Competitive Summit in October last year.

Gov't approves 10 new projects

These brought to 25 the total projects being coordinated within the LUB, which covers Central Luzon, Metro Manila, Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) and Marinduque and Occidental and Oriental Mindoro.

The LUB accounts for 55 percent of the country's gross domestic project, hosts 30 percent of the national population and 30 percent of the total labor force.

The 15 projects now under the LUB represent the bulk of the P372-billion budget earmarked for all five super regions.

Pamintuan assured the public of "full transparency" and that the projects were being undertaken at the "very least cost to the government."

"Our task is to orchestrate and fast-track the delivery of these projects. We're getting all the implementing agencies and stakeholders together to work as one to ensure the immediate completion of the projects," he said.

He allayed the fears of the group Edsa Para sa Masa that the mid-term elections would delay the P6.4-billion Light Rail Transit (LRT) 1 North Extension project that links the railway to the Metro Rail Transit (MRT).

President Macapagal-Arroyo had given clear instructions to have the LRT-MRT link finished before 2010, he said.

The 5.4-kilometer link will connect the MRT and LRT lines in Metro Manila.

Gov't brings back Investment Ombudsman

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE GOVERNment has reactivated the Office of the Investment Ombudsman to help cut bureaucratic red tape, which is hindering the growth of investments in the country.

Trade Secretary Peter Favila said here recently that the office was reactivated in response to the clamor of businesses and investors to make it easy for investors to do business, especially at the local level.

The office was created under the administration of deposed President Joseph Estrada but was shuttered when the present administration took over.

Favila said the office would oversee graft charges against government officials accused of blocking investment activities.

He said that with the office in place, the government hopes to attract more investments given the renewed confidence in the country's economy.

The Investment Ombudsman will also provide advice on various investment and business laws, rules and regulations and facilitate the processing of investment-related requirements.

Favila had also announced here that government agencies have put up an investment promotion fund to help local entrepreneurs, especially those engaged in small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

The fund will allow exporters to get the financial assistance they need to boost their competitiveness in the international market.

Favila said the fund would be used for product design, marketing and other programs.

He said the DTI and the Department of Finance contributed P100 million each to the fund.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas put in an initial contribution of P50 million, the National Economic Development Authority gave P20 million and Philippine Exporters Confederation, P10 million.

Favila said these measures would help sustain the economic growth rate recorded last year.

The country's gross national product (GNP) grew 6.2 percent while the gross domestic product grew by 5.4 percent last year.

The GDP refers to the total value of goods and services produced in the country, while the GNP includes income from abroad, such as remittances.

Biofuel source making a strong comeback

By Frank Cimatu
Inquirer Northern Luzon

TUBA, BENGUET—A LARGELY IGNORED biofuel source is making a comeback after a tobacco trader here decided to develop it as a a fuel source for flue curing barns.

Matthew Diong, executive vice president of Trans Manila Inc., said he was intrigued by the petroleum nut (Pittosporum resiniferum) or *hanga*, a wild aromatic tree endemic to the Philippines, after a visit to an area near Mt. Mayon in Albay.

He said children there were playing with the nuts and even set these on fire.

The flame, especially from the unripe fruits, was intense.

"It was like diesel," Diong said.

The Diongs bought some saplings of the petroleum tree and planted some in Barangay Tabaan Norte here, where they maintain a demonstration farm planted to premium Virginia tobacco.

TMI plans to plant 50,000 hanga trees in Tuba within the year.

The tree can grow up to 30 meters but already bears fruit when it reaches a height of six meters.

According to the "Handbook of Energy Crops" by James Duke, the hanga's green or yellow fruits contain dihydroterpene, which is used for perfumes and medicines, and heptane, a component of gasoline.

Studies cited by Duke said that a tree could yield 80 cubic centiliters of oil through squeezing. When the residue is ground and distilled, it could yield another 73 cubic centiliters of oil.

As it turned out, the hanga needs no introduction to the Cordillera because it grows abundantly in the region.

Hanga is known here as *apisang*, *abkol* and *langis* and is more popular for for its medicinal properties, and not as a potential fuel source.

Cordilleran healers use the fruit for intestinal and stomach pains while the oleoresin (a mixture of essential oil and resin) is said to cure leprosy and other skin diseases.

Sitel scouts for new sites

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—THE BUSINESS PROCESS outsourcing industry is expected to be the country's third largest foreign exchange earner in three years.

Danilo Reyes, country manager of the merged Client Logic Philippines and Sitel Philippines, said the government had acknowledged that the BPO industry was growing and would likely become the third biggest source of foreign exchange after the semiconductor industry and overseas Filipino workers.

Reyes, who is also president of the Business Process Association of the Philippines, said the industry expects to earn a combined $12 billion and employ a million people by 2010.

Reyes also said that the merger between Client Logic and Sitel was a contributor to the growth of the growing BPO industry.

The merger took place in January and the company has started construction of a facility at the Baguio City Economic Zone, which will house the combined workforce of 6,000 employees.

The new Sitel is scouting for new satellite sites in the Visayas and Mindanao, Reyes added.

Client Logic set up its operations at the Baguio City Economic Zone in 2004, where Texas Instruments Philippines Inc. pioneered in 1980, despite resistance from the firm's American and Filipino leaders, Reyes said.

In less than two years of operation, Client Logic and most BPOs managed to generate combined revenues of $3.6 billion, Reyes said.

TVI to step up mining activity

By Ryan D. Rosauro
Inquirer Mindanao

DIPOLOG CITY—CANADIAN MINING OUTFIT TVI Pacific Inc. is stepping up its copper and gold exploration activities in Zamboanga del Norte following the "positive results" of the surveys of two sites.

TVI said in a statement that the two sites that yielded traces of a new copper and gold prospect were the Tapisa and Tamarok areas of Jose Dalman town.

TVI president and chief executive officer Clifford James said "the company plans to pursue the Tamarok and Tapisa tenement applications on a priority basis."

Based on the survey, mineralized deposits were detected in an area about 10 square kilometers in size.

TVI's said the results were "encouraging" and that they indicated a possible extensive copper-gold system in the area.

Exploration activities in Tamarok and Tapisa began in March 2006.

Commenting on the recent findings, James said "follow-up drilling is required to enable us to assess the continuity of the mineralization in all directions, and to enable us to start getting a handle on the potential of these areas."

Rochelle Gamboa Hilario, TVIRD media relations officer, said a more detailed geological survey of the two sites were scheduled this year.

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
PhilHealth Regional Office IV-B
PSDC Bldg.,89 P. Burgos cor. Alegre Sts., Batangas City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Bidding for the Contract of Security and Janitorial Services CY 2007
ITB # PRO4B-07-02

The **PHILHEALTH REGIONAL OFFICE IV-B (PRO IV-B)** through the corporate operating budget of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation 2007 intends to apply the sum of *three million one hundred eleven thousand two hundred seventy eight pesos (Php 3,111,278.00)* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contracts for Security and Janitorial Services. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

LOT	PARTICULARS	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Cost of Bid Document
1	**Security Services** 5 - guards (3 shift schedule) PRO (Batangas City) 16 - guards (8 day shift & 8 night shift) Service Offices: 2- Oriental Mindoro 2- Occidental Mindoro 2- Romblon 2- Marinduque 2- Palawan 2- Tanauan 2- Balayan 2- Rosario	Php 2,401,984.00	Php 2,500.00
2	**Janitorial Services** 4 - janitors (8 hrs Monday to Friday) PRO Batangas City 8 - janitors (8 hrs Monday to Friday) Service Offices: 1- Oriental Mindoro 1- Occidental Mindoro 1- Romblon 1- Marinduque 1- Palawan 1- Tanauan 1- Balayan 1- Rosario	Php 709,294.00	Php 700.00

The **PRO IV-B** now invites Bids from eligible bidders for the bidding of Contracts for Security and Janitorial Services. This contract shall take effect on *May 1, 2007 until December 31, 2007.* The description of an eligible bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organization of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder of the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the PhilHealth Regional Office IV-B and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount presented above. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The PRO IV-B will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **March 28, 2007, 10:00 a.m.** at the 3rd Floor, Conference Room, PhilHealth Regional Office IV-B.

Bids and Eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before ***April 11, 2007, 9:00 a.m.*** Late bids shall not be accepted. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following forms and amount.

FORMS OF SECURITY	Minimum Amount in % of ABC to be Bid
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1%)
2. Bank Guarantee	One and a half percent (1 1/2%)

Bid opening shall be on ***April 11, 2007, 10:00 a.m.*** at the 3rd Floor, Conference Room, PhilHealth Regional Office IV-B. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The PRO IV-B reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Rhonalyn Marasigan / Johnrey Iguiron (BAC Secretariats)
PhilHealth Regional Office IV-B
PSDC Bldg. #89 P. Burgos corner Alegre Sts., Batangas City
Tel. No. (043)723-8822 loc. 201
Facsimile No. (043)723-8822 loc. 409
e-mail address: region4b@philhealth.gov.ph

(Sgd.) CIRILO C. BALMACEDA
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee
(PDI-March 12, 2007)

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** Please use extra sheet for additional participants or call th e "CHANGING LIVES" Secretariat.

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Unilab probes gene-cholesterol link

FILIPINO SCIENTISTS AT LEADING PHARmaceutical company United Laboratories Inc (Unilab) are now looking at genes associated with cardiovascular diseases to determine more responsive treatment methods for Filipinos with high cholesterol.

Unilab division vice president for medical affairs Dr. Alex Tuazon elaborated that Unilab scientists are now looking in particular at a gene that encodes a substance called Cholesteryl Ester Transfer Protein or CETP.

"CETP is an enzyme that plays an important role in the metabolism of cholesterol," said Tuazon. "The variation in the CETP gene may exist in any of these forms: CETP B1B1, CETP B1B2 and CETP B2B2. Any of these variations or polymorphisms can affect the regulation of cholesterol levels in the human blood," he explained.

"To determine how these genetic variations affect the treatment of patients with high cholesterol, Unilab scientists are examining the genetic variations of CETP in a group of patients receiving statin therapy," he said. "Statin is a form of cholesterol-lowering medicine."

Preliminary results of the study show that individuals carrying a CETP B1B1 gene variation responded faster to statin as shown by a rapid increase in HDL or good cholesterol levels within the first two weeks of treatment.

On the other hand, patients who are carrying a variation called CETP B1B2 showed slow response to the statin treatment. "They therefore require longer treatment before their HDL or good cholesterol level increased," he said.

"The study also found out that majority of Filipino patients who were examined belong to the group that require a long period of statin treatment," he added.

Unilab continues to undertake research studies on chronic diseases like high cholesterol to determine more responsive treatment methods for Filipinos and better help them in disease management.

BUSINESS BOOST FOR TOURISM INDUSTRY

Furthering its Go Negosyo campaign aimed at promoting a culture of entrepreneurship in the country, the Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship (PCE) recently held the Tourism Negosyo Expo, which hopes to vivify the local tourism scene through different business ventures. The expo also served as platform for President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Presidential Consultant for Entrepreneurship Jose Concepcion III (in green, beside the President) to honor the country's top tourism entrepreneurs. In the photo are (from left) Joaquin Po (Asian Spirit), Jomar Fleras (Sanctuario Spa), Ariel Jersey (EZ Maps), Jay Aldeguer (Islands Souvenirs), Anton Carag (Adventures and Expeditions Phils, Inc.), DOT Usec. Oscar Palabyab, Gov. Lray Villafuerte, Jose Mari del Rosario (Microtel), Evangeline Garcia (Callos Spa), Conrado Escudero (Villa Escudero). Other awardees are Vicky Wallace (Bohol Bee Farm), Ralph Espino (Aquamundo), and Robert Yupangco (Zoobic).

Nokia Mobile Madness with BPI

ALWAYS WANTED TO OWN THAT STYLISH phone or upgrade to one that has the newest features like a megapixel camera, e-mail and Internet capabilities, radio, 3G technology, or video functionalities? Now is your chance to live your mobile dreams as Nokia joins the BPI Madness from Feb. 28 to March 17 at the Glorietta Activity Center. Choose from a wide array of Nokia mobile phones with 0-percent interest for six to 12 months on a BPI credit card.

Nokia offers a slew of mobile phones that cater to every personality. Music lovers will skip to the beat of Nokia mobile phones that have built-in music players-the 2GB Nokia N70 and Nokia N73, 8GB Nokia N91, and the Nokia 5300 XpressMusic. For those who are always on the go for business, there is the Nokia E61, Nokia E50, and Nokia E70. When it calls for simple elegance, there is the Nokia 6233, Nokia 6030, Nokia 6151, and Nokia 6101. And for the seasoned stylish fashionista, there is the Nokia 7373, Nokia 7360, Nokia 7390, and Nokia 8800 Sirocco Edition. For the everyday adventurer, they can get the Nokia 5500 Sport. Shutterhappy folk will enjoy clicking away with the megapixel prowess of the Nokia N73 and Nokia N93, both with a 3.2-megapixel camera and Carl Zeiss optics.

Whatever your choice or personality, Nokia has the right mobile phone for you.

Exercise your purchasing power now and give yourself a well deserved mobile treat.

BRITISH EMBASSY BREAKS GROUND AT MCKINLEY HILL

British Ambassador to the Philippines Peter Beckingham (center) leads the groundbreaking rites to jumpstart the construction of the British Embassy's new office on a prime 1.2-hectare property at McKinley Hill. Foreign Commonwealth Office Director General Richard Stagg (left) lowers the time capsule as (from left) Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo, Taguig City Mayor Sigfrido Tiñga and Megaworld chair and CEO Andrew Tan look on. The new British Embassy will rise at the institutional block of the fully masterplanned McKinley Hill, Megaworld Corp's new 50-hectare township project at Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City. World-class hospitality training institution Enderun Colleges is already operating in McKinley Hill, while the Korean and Chinese International Schools are set to open their campuses soon. As a complete township offering the 'Live-Work-Play-Learn' advantage, McKinley Hill also features exciting retail and office components. It also features the high-end residential subdivision McKinley Hill Village and condominiums including McKinley Hill Villas and Stamford Executive Residences.

'Go for Honda Great Offers' extended to March 31

HONDA CARS PHILIPPINES INC (HCPI) is pleased to announce the extension of Honda Great Offers promo until March 31.

Gear up to drive Honda's curvy and compact SUV with exciting perks and bring home a new CRV. Have roomy, convenient, and easy-to-drive benefits, and get free LTO registration for three years. CRV buyers also have options to choose from any of the fantastic perks: a comprehensive VIP insurance, 0-percent interest on the first year of financing or cash incentive.

Own a 2.4L CRV and get P100,000 cash incentive or take home the 2.0L CRV and carry a P65,000 cash incentive.

City and Jazz enthusiasts get attractive P10,000 cash incentives in purchasing their dream rides.

Purchase the 2.0L Civic model and get free LTO registration for three years. Experience pure exhilaration and sporty performance level with your new Civic.

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Customers can also enjoy the consumer-friendly financing scheme plans. For as low as P8,959 a month, purchase a Honda Civic with 50-percent downpayment through low monthly installment. Be the newest and happiest Honda Accord owner through low downpayment plans of as low as P220,500 or 15-percent downpayment. Financing deals apply to all Honda's product lines.

Hurry! Now is your chance to purchase your fave Honda sedan through the extended promo. Fantastic deals, delightful discounts, and additional perks await you at your nearest dealer.

Promo period runs until March 31 only. For more information, see posters and print ads for more details.

Samsung Electronics undertakes new process technology

SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS CO LTD, the world leader in advanced memory technology, announced recently that it has begun mass producing the industry's first 1Gigabit (Gb) DDR2 DRAM (dynamic random access memory) using 60 nanometer (nm)-class process technology.

Use of the new process technology is a significant milestone in that it increases production efficiency by 40 percent over the 80nm process technology deployed in DRAM fabrication since early 2006, and offers twice the productivity of 90nm general process technology.

Ample market availability of 1Gb DRAM will further increase the demand for large density DRAMs, especially as the new premium Vista operating system imposes a DRAM requirement of at least 1Gigabyte (GB). Samsung's extensive line up of 60nm 1Gb DRAM-based modules includes 512MB, 1GB, and 2GB densities supporting either 667Mbps or 800Mbps speeds with customer validation.

Samsung anticipates such a high degree of receptivity to the 60nm process that it should drive greater demand for 1Gb DRAM chips in the near future over today's mainstream density of 512Mb.

Samsung's continuous technology migration below 90nm has relied heavily on the company's extensive use of three-dimensional transistor technologies to build increasingly smaller chips, a fundamentally unique approach toward finer circuit designs and higher yields. One of the key technologies involved in the development of Samsung's 3D transistor is a recess channel array transistor (RCAT) that actually builds the DRAM cell three-dimensionally to minimize its size while increasing its density.

Samsung's proprietary RCAT technology was first introduced at the 2003 VLSI symposia. This new 3D transistor technology doubles the refresh cycle, which is critical for enabling efficient fabrication on a nanometer-scale. Samsung has been utilizing RCAT for DRAM fabrication from 90nm. This key 3D technology is expected to enable DRAM fabrication to 50nm and lower.

In addition to its 60nm process technology innovation, Samsung's use of metal-insulator metal (MIM) for its capacitors provides enhanced data storage in sub-70nm designs.

Furthermore, the use of a recently announced selective epitaxial growth (SEG) technology provides for a broader electron channel, and optimizes the speed of each chip's electrons to reduce power consumption and enable higher performance.

The 60nm 1Gb DDR2 DRAM, which was first developed by Samsung in 2005, is the latest in a long line of Samsung industry "firsts" in nano-scale DRAM advancements. This record of DRAM innovation stretches from the introduction of 150nm DRAM technology in 2000, to a yet-to-be-deployed 50nm process technology developed in October of last year.

The 60nm process is expected to become the mainstream circuit technology for DRAM in 2008. In the first year of market availability alone, 60nm DRAM revenues are expected to reach $2.3 billion worldwide and further increase to $32 billion by 2009.

YEC launches audio sale

YUPANGCO ELECTRONICS Corp (YEC) again launches the "The Great Pro Audio Sale 2007", its annual sale of professional audio (PA) equipment ongoing until March 31. Various industries (such as entertainment, resorts and hotels, schools, churches, bars and restaurants, multi-purpose centers, and individual homes) again have the opportunity to take advantage of special giveaway premiums and marked down prices of up to 70-percent discount on world-renowned brands like Yamaha, Apogee, Celestion, Sennheiser Evolution Microphones, Soundtech and Tannoy.

Irresistible offers like a free Sennheiser E-835S Microphone and one SEMS-3000 Microphone Stand for a minimum single purchase of P50,000 worth of pro audio products, free one set of Sennheiser FP-35 Wireless Microphone for a minimum single purchase of P100,000 worth of select pro audio products, free four units of Sennheiser E-604 Drum Microphones and one E-602 Kick Microphone for a minimum single purchase of P200,000 worth of select pro audio products and free one unit of Yamaha EMX-62M Powered Mixer, a pair of S-15 Compact Speakers and one FX-108 Discovery Sound for a minimum single purchase of P300,000 worth of select pro audio products are up for grabs.

On top of these offers, customers should not miss the Sennheiser Trade-In Promotion. Trade in any brand of wired microphone (working or non-working) for one unit of Sennheiser E-835S Microphone and get a P1,500 discount from the list price. Trade in any brand of wireless microphone (working or non-working) for one set of Sennheiser FP-35 Wireless Microphone and get a discount of P7,000 from the list price. How can you go wrong on these opportunities to enhance or set up your own sound system?

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Ford, FedGolf, HIP organize 'shootout'

REPRESENTATIVES OF FORD GROUP PHILippines, the Federation of Golf Clubs Inc (FedGolf) and Golf Digest Philippines Magazine forged an agreement March 7 at the Manila Golf and Country Club Inc in Makati City to organize the Ford National Team Shootout, a three-month-long tournament presented by Ford Group Philippines with the Federation of Golf Clubs Inc and Golf Digest Philippines, the country's most comprehensive golf magazine that features international and local golf content. Gold Digest Philippines is published by Hinge Inquirer Publications.

Twenty-seven federation member clubs are participating (tournament began March 10 at the club level stage). Winners of this stage advance to the regional satellites in April and May. Those who top the regional satellites will, in turn, compete at the grand finals on May 31 and June 1.

The tournament kicked off March 10 at Sta. Elena Golf & Country Club, Manila Golf Club Inc, Negros Occidental Golf & Country Club, and at the Iloilo Golf and Country Club.

The schedule of the tournament at the club level stage is as follows: Alta Vista Golf & Country Club, March 12 to 14; Mimosa Golf & Country Club, March 16; Royal Northwoods Golf & Country Club, Orchard Golf & Country Club, and Mt. Malarayat Golf & Country Club, March 17; The Orchard Golf & Country Club and Camp John Hay Golf Club, March 18; Cebu Country Club Inc, March 20; Alabang Country Club Inc, Riviera Golf Club Inc, Sherwood Hills Golf Club, Forest Hills Golf & Country Club, Pueblo de Oro Golf & Country Club and Canlubang Golf & Country Club, March 24; Manila Southwoods Golf & Country Club and Splendido Taal Golf Corp, March 25; Eastridge Golf Club, March 28; Valley Golf & Country Club, Splendido Taal Golf Corp, Tagaytay Highlands International Golf Club Inc and Tagaytay Midlands International Golf Club Inc, March 31; Eagleridge Golf & Country Club, April 1; Wack Wack Golf & Country Club, April 12; Ayala Greenfields Golf & Country Club and Baguio Country Club schedules will be announced later.

Stage 2 of the tournament will be held at Sherwood Hills Golf Club for Luzon West on April 23; Camp John Hay for Luzon North (schedule to be arranged); the East Course of the Wack Wack Golf & Country Club for Luzon East on May 15; the Lobo-Malipunyo Course of Mt. Malarayat for South Luzon on May 17; and Cebu Country Club for Vis-Min on May 20.

The Grand Finals will be held at the Tagaytay Highlands International Golf Club on May 31 and the Tagaytay Midlands International Golf Club on June 1.

SHOWN, (from left), are Paul Vincent Bermudez, senior vice president and general manager of Hinge Inquirer Publications; David O. Valdes, president of Hinge Inquirer Publications; Glen Dasig, AVP-Brands North America BU & C- Cars; Porfirio M. Flores, auditor, FedGolf; and lawyer Teofilo C. Abejo III, corporate secretary, FedGolf.

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NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION OF YELLOW CAB BICUTAN FOOD CORPORATION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Articles of Incorporation of YELLOW CAB BICUTAN FOOD CORPORATION has been duly amended by shortening the corporate term thereof and thereby dissolving the said corporation as of February 15, 2007.

(Sgd.) VICTORIA M. VIZCONDE
Corporate Secretary

(PDI–March 5, 12 & 19, 2007)

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"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

To the Family and Friends of the late

ATTY. JOSEFINA SORIANO BILAR

The following Masses will be offered today, **March 12, 2007** in remembrance of her **14th Death Anniversary**.

1. **Our Lady of Fatima Parish** ..... 6:00 a.m., 6:45 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.
   Philamlife Village, Las Piñas City
2. **San Lorenzo Ruiz Minor Basilica** ..... 12:15 p.m.
   Plaza Calderon, Binondo, Manila
3. **Shrine of the Divine Mercy** ..... 6:00 p.m.
   Mandaluyong City
4. **Saint Anthony Parish** ..... 7:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
   Singalong, Malate, Manila
5. **Holy Cross Parish** ..... 6:00 a.m.
   Noveleta, Cavite

Dr. Ponciano "Ning" Dela Paz

Chancellor, Center for Teacher Education
President, RCEE
Vice Chairman, Board of Trustees, Roosevelt College System
Board Member, Roosevelt College System

Joined his Creator on March 9, 2007.

His wife **Salvacion "Selly" Dela Paz**; children **Marco** and **Sellyna May**, sister **Dr. Margarita "Babes" Dela Paz**, other relatives and friends request prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Christ the King Church Greenmeadows.

On March 14, 2007 his cremated remains shall be interred at Christ the King Greenmeadows after the 1:30 p.m. Mass.

In celebration of a New life...

OSCAR MANGUBAT BRION, M.D.

January 8, 1945 - March 8, 2007
of San Pablo City
joined his Creator at the age of 62.

Diplomate, Philippine Board of Surgery
Fellow, Philippine Society of General Surgeons
Fellow, Philippine College of Surgeons
Fellow, International College of Surgeons
Fellow, Philippine Society for Trauma Surgery
Hospital Director of San Pablo Doctors Hospital
UE College of Medicine Batch '70
UP-PGH Surgery Residency, Batch '75
Fellow, Philippine Association of Laparoscopic & Endoscopic Surgery
Upsilon Sigma Phi, Batch '63
Alpha Sigma

His loving wife **Dr. Baby Calayan Brion**; his son, **Marc** and daughter **Denise**; parents **Dr. Archimedes P. Brion** (†) and **Paz Lacson-Mangubat** (†) and in-laws **Dr. Emeterio Calayan, Jr.** (†) & **Dra. Josefina V. Calayan**; siblings **Ludy, Carlo, Aleli, Evie, May, Arnel** & **Larry**; in-laws, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Resurrection Chapel San Pablo City Cathedral, San Pablo City from Monday, March 12 thru Thursday, March 15, 2007.

Interment will be on Thursday, March 15, 2007 at San Gabriel Memorial Park, San Pablo City after the 2:00 p.m. Mass which will be celebrated at the Resurrection Chapel, San Pablo City, Laguna.

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Families are SWUPing, Business is Booming

Easy Sunday shopping: It's definitely plastic for mom, now that her favorite organic market takes credit and debit card payments.

Gas up anywhere: Dad hits the highway with his bike buddies knowing he'll never be too far away to SWUP it.

We've spotted a new phenomenon at countertops and storefronts around town lately. It's the new PLDT Shops.Work UnPlugged wireless card swipe machines that are working in almost every imaginable retail transaction you can think of. Entire families are getting into the act.

These days, there's no need for anyone in the family to worry about carrying cash. That's because, SWUP card swipes allow customers to pay through their debit and credit cards right there and then: tiangges, outdoor cafes, last-mile gas stations, delivery services, and even roving taxis!

SWUP wireless card swipe terminals can process payments from Visa, MasterCard, JCB and Amex through the Equitable Card Network, the largest in the country, so transactions are now more convenient than ever. Business owners can now deploy SWUP on site, no matter where their stores may be. This means they can accept plastic in their remote branches and seize the opportunity to make more sales.

For customers, it gives them even more buying power as their cards are accepted at more locations and establishments. Conversely, for business it means a greater actual customer base.

Oh and did we mention it looks ultra chic and cool too?

Commuting First Class: Ate has no problem getting around now that taxis can SWUP it!

Lunch at exotic locations: Romantic dates in remote locations are no problem for Kuya, now that he can SWUP it!

MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2007

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Executive Suits

BUSINESS Monday

B2-1

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RP Muslim traders extend reach to Malaysia

Local firms should look at this market

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

TAUSUG TRADER BAIROLLA AJIR from Jolo, Sulu, has built a comfortable life for herself selling ripe Philippine mangoes for the past 18 years.

Anzhar Muhali of Siasi, Sulu, on the other hand, has found his niche as a tailor, while Heife Airane has found her fortune in selling cosmetics and whitening products over the past 20 years.

They are just a few of the estimated 100,000 Filipinos, the majority from Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Basilan, who now call Sandakan, a town in the north Bornean state of Sabah, their home.

The proximity and cultural link between the southern islands of the Philippines and Sandakan, Sabah, resulted in brisk trade between the two communities that has continued to flourish centuries after the first goods were exchanged.

That trade entered a new phase in 1994 with the formation of the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East Asean Growth Area.

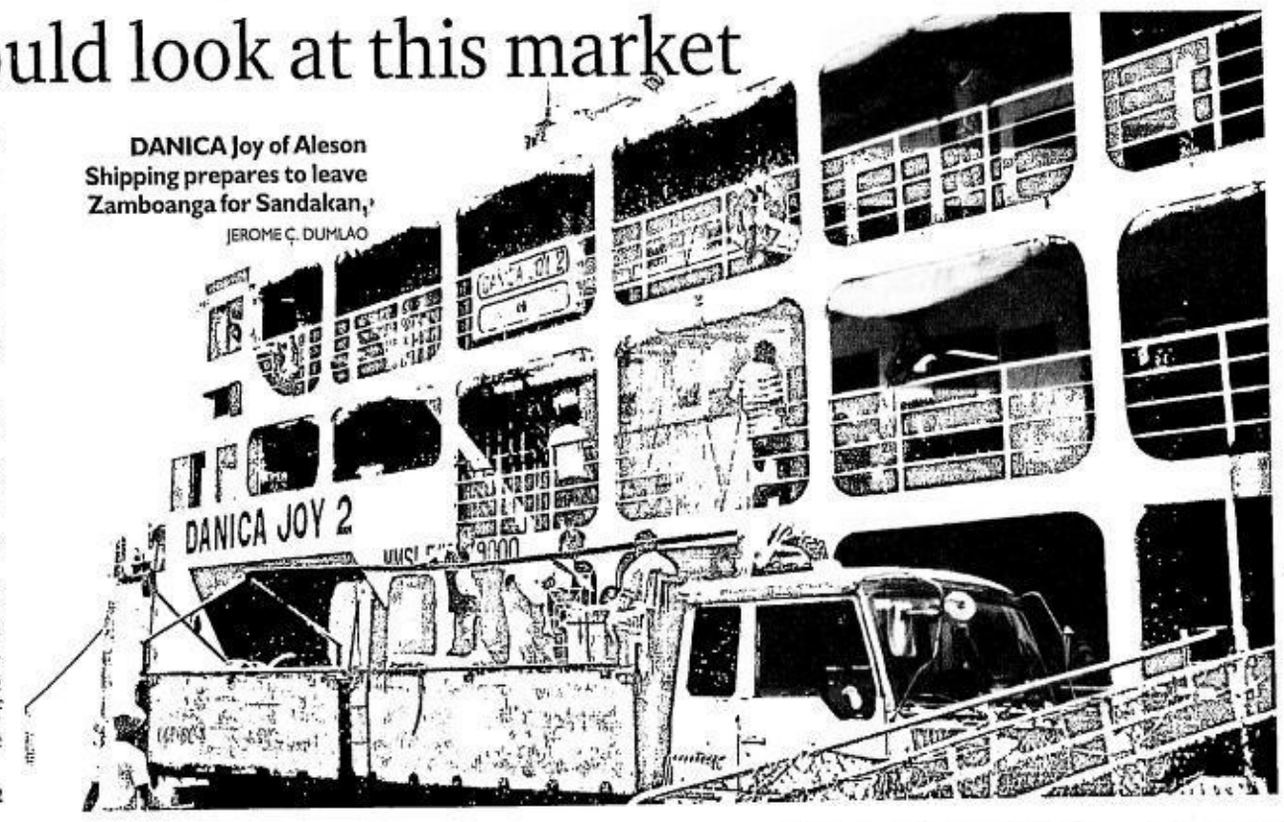
BIMP-Eaga was set up to encourage trade, tourism and investments among the four countries, and one offshoot was the start of shipping services between the southern islands of the Philippines and Sandakan.

Every Monday and Thursday, about 100 passengers from Zamboanga, Tawi-Tawi and Sulu board a Weesam boat for the 12-hour trip to Sandakan, Malaysia, bringing with them hopes of better employment and trade opportunities.

Almost at the same time, another boat operated by Aleson Shipping Co. leaves the port of Zamboanga for Sandakan, filled with passengers and traders with their cargo of mostly personal care and food products that are increasingly in demand in neighboring Malaysia.

It was not too long ago when travel and trade between Zamboanga, Tawi-Tawi, Sulu and Malaysia were restricted to undocumented crossings of wooden hull boats, putting the passengers and their cargo at constant risk of harassment and even incarceration because of lack of proper travel documents.

RP MUSLIM/ B2-2



DANICA Joy of Aleson Shipping prepares to leave Zamboanga for Sandakan,
JEROME Ç. DUMLAO

A CASE FOR LEASING

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Mr. Larry P. Llamzon
Country Manager
DHL Express (Philippines) Corporation

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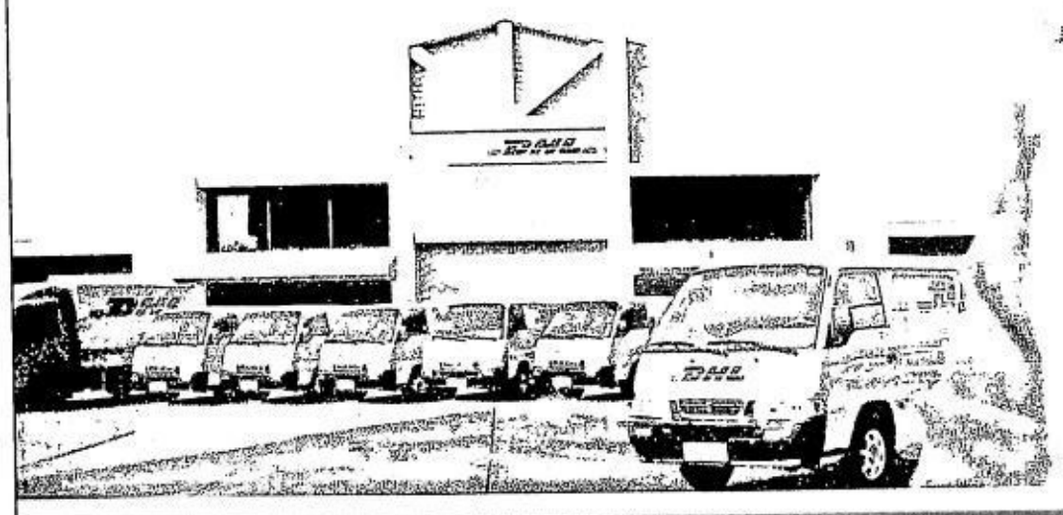

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Big pharma's bitter pill: Part I

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Dr. Niceto S. Poblador

A CASE OF CORPORATE SOCIAL irresponsibility?

The recent ruckus in the media about the botched-up attempt by lobbyists to stop congressional debates on a bill that sought to allow "parallel importation" of patented drugs into the country was a public relations disaster to the Philippine pharmaceutical industry.

It was particularly damaging to Pfizer, the industry giant whose best-selling anti-hypertension drug Norvasc is priced locally at almost 10 times the price in India and elsewhere. The feeble attempt by its lawyers to justify their client's apparently odious pricing policies only made things worse for the embattled multinational.

A few mouse clicks at Pfizer.com reveal a totally different picture of the world's leading pharmaceutical firm. Its homepage is brimming with eye-catching statements that reflect the company's self image.

For example, the company banners its commitment not only to discovering and developing innovative medicines—which it does admirably well—but also to "...promoting access to those in need around the world." From what is generally known about the firm's pricing tactics, these all sounds more like the usual catchy clichés and empty slogans that one typically finds in corporate vision statements.

Are the people who run Pfizer and the other pharmaceutical multinationals truly the socially irresponsible and uncaring corporate managers they are pictured to be, or is there something more fundamental behind these companies' apparently loathsome pricing behavior?

Jaded business model

We believe that Pfizer's dilemma is not simply the result of irresponsible and unethical corporate behavior. That, to our minds, is a rather simplistic assessment. Rather, it is the offshoot of a business model that has long become jaded and irrelevant.

Today's breakthrough drugs and medicines such as Lipitor and Viagra, are examples of what are collectively known as "information goods." They are typically costly to produce, but almost costless to reproduce.

This is true of many other products such as blockbuster movies, recorded music, published works and high-tech "handhelds" such as the iPod.

Pricing a product to maximize profits, we have learned in Economics 101, requires that the last unit sold should cover the additional cost of producing it.

However, when applied to information goods, the MC = MR principle usually leads to an untenable situation where the price is smaller than the average cost of the product, which includes huge developmental costs spread over the patented life of the product.

Producing different versions of the product and selling these at different prices in different market segments can generate additional revenues not only to cover developmental costs but also to ensure reasonable profits.

For example, a limited number of hard-cover copies of a potentially best-selling novel can be printed and distributed to "high-end" readers, along with paperback editions intended for the less affluent and less fastidious The iPod comes in different versions, each priced differently and intended for a specific market niche.

However, this pricing strategy is not applicable to most new drugs. Except for minor differences in packaging to suit local requirement, Norvasc can be dispensed in only one chemical formulation.

It is a case of "one size fits all" where developing many versions in the usual manner is not a feasible marketing strategy.

What multinational drug companies do is to segment markets by country where demand configuration and elasticity are estimated on the basis of socio-economic indicators and local regulatory constraints.

Here, the pricing-what-the-market-can bear strategy leads to what can easily be interpreted as "unfair and unethical."

One obvious way out of this dilemma is to reduce the huge developmental and promotional costs that have long characterized the industry. This is a lot easier said than done, however.

Changing tactics

To its credit, Pfizer seems to have taken the first painful steps in moving away from its long-held conservative ways.

The first indication of an impending strategic shift is it's choice of a new CEO in the person of Jeffrey Kindler. I looked up his name and went away impressed: Young, an academic record that is second to none (BA, Tufts University Summa Cum Laude), Doctor of Jurisprudence, Harvard (Magna Cum Laude), and professional credentials that are impeccable (Partner of the law firm Williams and Connolly, EVP and General Counsel, McDonalds Corp.).

From what I have learned about him from other sources, he seems to be the person to lead the company—and perhaps the industry—into a different trajectory.

The same company website referred to earlier in this article also seems to give signs of winds of change. In a link to "Where the Company is Headed," the following policy directions are listed:

- Coordinating across business units to share learning from local and global partners
- Reaching out to more stakeholders
- Seeking out partners willing to break out of the view that health care access is a zero-sum game.

In a sequel to this column, I shall attempt to explain how these and other initiatives may be just the magic bullet that will move the beleaguered industry out of its current rut.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is an active academic and a knowledge management consultant. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph).

MOVEMENTS

New country head to lead CIGI and SIG

THE LINDE GROUP APPOINTED DENNIS JORDAN TO LEAD ITS INDUSTRIAL gases operations in the Philippines effective Jan. 1, 2007. After a buyout of the BOC Group (a UK-based company) in February 2006, The Linde Group, the world's largest industrial gas company based in Munich, Germany, now owns the country's leading industrial gas companies in the Philippines.

CIGI (Consolidated Industrial Gases Inc.) with operations mainly in Luzon, and SIG (Southern Industrial Gases Inc.) which operates in Visayas and Mindanao, will now be managed by Dennis Jordan as the first country managing director for Linde in the Philippines.

Jordan will spearhead the successful delivery of the two businesses' safety and financial targets in the business areas of bulk, packaged gas and products, and electronics. Jordan will ensure the development and implementation of annual and medium-term plans and budgets which will meet the company's strategic objectives; maintain the necessary production capability to meet identified customer requirements within defined cost and quality standards; and ensure that the company has the appropriate processes and systems to monitor and control its operations effectively and achieve its financial targets.

Jordan will also be responsible for implementing regional functional initiatives to achieve best operational and commercial practices throughout the country and further strengthen The Linde Group's business operations.

Prior to assuming his new position to manage both CIGI and SIG, Jordan served as general manager for the industrial and special products line of business in the Legacy BOC organization in the Philippines from 2004 to 2006 replacing then a British national who was managing the business. Prior to that, he was assigned for two years in Sydney, Australia, on a marketing role from 2002 to 2004. Jordan brings with him an inherent understanding of the Filipino market that will contribute to the strengthening of CIGI and SIG's positions in the Philippines.

Jordan is just one of several key appointments in CIGI within the year. Last year, global gas companies Linde and The BOC Group combined its resources to create the industry's leading global player, under the new umbrella organization of The Linde Group.

Setting up a listening post for consumers

NO BUSINESS PROVIDING PRODucts or services to a mass market can hope to survive and grow unless it earns the trust of consumers. To earn that trust, a successful business strives to build a continuing relationship with consumers, one that involves fulfilling their needs and wants. An important aspect of that relationship is, of course, listening to them.

The Nestlé Care Center, an integral part of Nestlé Philippines' consumer services unit, plays a key role in this communication process.

"The care center is an important touch point through which we literally listen to the voices of our consumers. While we have many points of contact with our consumers, the most preferred as of now is our telephone hotline number, 898-0061. Whether positive or negative, we welcome feedback from our consumers. We want them to share their feelings, reactions and views about the company and our products. We believe that every consumer who contacts us is expressing interest in our company and our products," Nestlé Care Center head Tess Banno explains.

TESS Banno

The hotline is manned by representatives Mondays to Fridays, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Outside of these days and hours, the system is equipped to record messages from consumers. Tess notes that while most contacts are received via the hotline, increasingly, consumers are e-mailing Nestlé via consumer.services@ph.nestle.com.

The bulk of calls and e-mails from consumers consist of questions, suggestions and comments on product features and promotions. The information from each consumer contact is entered into a Nestlé proprietary system called Consoplus, which allows the data to be stored in the system for a number of years. All information is accessible online to consumer services personnel and the Nestlé quality assurance laboratories.

Product complaints are handled with careful attention. In attending to product complaints, Nestlé adheres to an established procedure, which starts with a Nestlé field representative visiting the consumer's home to get the product being complained about. The retrieved product is then sent to the Nestlé QA laboratory which conducts a thorough analysis of the product in question to determine the cause of the reported problem.

"For Nestlé to be able to conduct a complete and thorough analysis of the reported problem, our quality assurance specialists have to test the entire product, which includes its content and packaging. It is here that we ask for the cooperation of consumers so that we can address complaints properly and promptly," Tess says.

The care center constantly trains its agents and field representatives. They are kept up to speed on new products, promotions, events and company developments.

RP Muslim traders extend reach . . .

From page B2-1

As such, trade and travel were limited and the full potential was never unleashed.

Good business sense

The creation of BIMP-Eaga and its promise of prosperity eventually made investing in a shipping line between the two countries good business sense, according to Aleson vice president Feliciano A. Tan Jr.

Tan says in an interview that the shipping line resulted from a trip that his brother made to Malaysia in 1994 when BIMP-Eaga had just been formed.

His brother was part of the official delegation sent to Malaysia and he came home fired up with the idea of providing a shipping service.

"We were encouraged to support the trade links. We did, and the first trip to Sandakan was made in October 1994," Tan says.

He says the first trip was encouraging because he felt that Aleson contributed to putting Zamboanga on the map because it was now doing direct and legal trips to Malaysia, making it a truly international port.

The 51-year-old Hji. Wahab A. Amil, chairman and president of SRN Fast Seacrafts Inc., on the other hand, saw the trade potential between Zamboanga and Malaysia as early as 1976 when he engaged in barter trade.

Trade was easy because of the religious and cultural affinity between the people of Zamboanga and Malaysia, particularly in Sabah and Sandakan, which were closer to Mindanao than the Philippines' capital of Metro Manila.

"You trade in Sabah the same as you would in Zamboanga," Wahab says in an interview.

Shipping lines

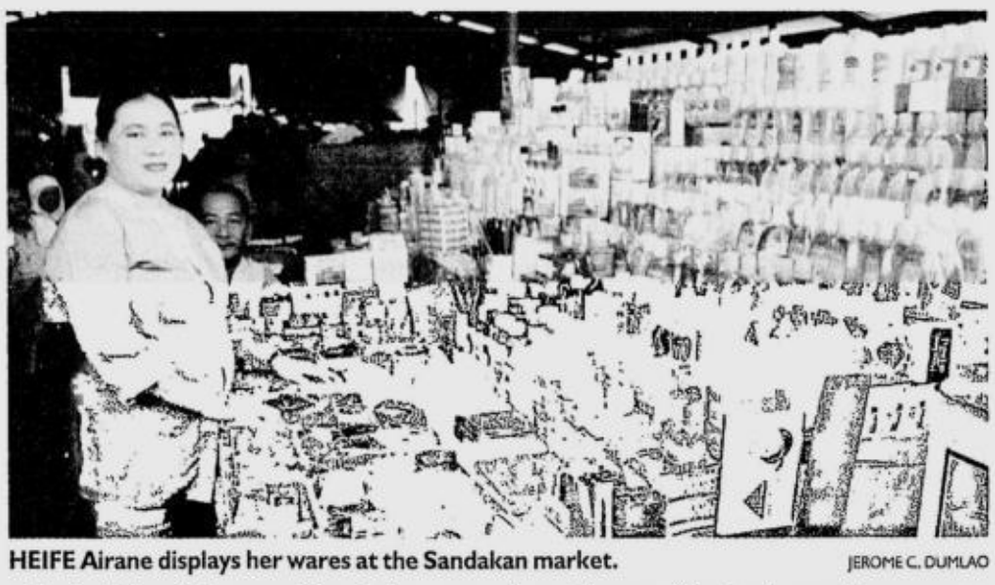
Realizing that the growing Filipino community will be a good market for a transport service, Wahab established a line between Zamboanga and Sandakan in 2001.

His fast craft passenger ships are made in Malaysia and they are the only ones that make regular stops through Bongao, Tawi-Tawi and Jolo, Sulu.

Wahab says he concentrated on a passenger service because many Filipinos from the islands regularly go to Malaysia to visit their relatives or to find work for themselves, mostly in the construction and factory sites.

Since there is no visa requirement, they can regularly go in and out of Malaysia provided they stay for a maximum of 15 days. Some just go back for a week and then go back for another two weeks.

"They find a lot of employment opportunities in Malaysia because it is a richer country and it is usually their relatives who encourage them to go and work with them," Wahab says.



HEIFE Airane displays her wares at the Sandakan market. JEROME C. DUMLAO

Aleson's Tan and SRN's Wahab both say that the low travel tax between the two countries as part of the BIMP-Eaga agreements was a big help to their operations.

BIMP-Eaga is being strengthened with help from the German Technical Cooperation.

Because it only cost the passengers P200 in travel tax to travel to Malaysia, it was easier for them to frequently board a ship and sail for Malaysia.

Wahab says that when the travel tax was just at P200, his ships would carry more than 100 people per trip. Tan made the same estimate for his ship.

Operations soured last year when the travel tax skyrocketed to P2,600 because the memorandum of agreement putting the travel tax at just P200 expired.

Ticket sales quickly dropped and Wahab says the Weesum ships were suddenly just bringing less than 50 passengers a trip.

Aleson ships were no better, but they had to make the trip even if there were just a few passengers and a few kilos of cargo on board because it was a commitment.

"The travel tax was just too much. The passengers cannot afford it, because remember they are going to Malaysia for work. Only a few go there for purely trade," Wahab says.

Travel tax restored

Fortunately, the old travel tax rate was restored in August and the shipping companies are optimistic that passenger take-up will soon increase and maybe even surpass previous numbers.

Tan says the traffic would also receive a big boost if more of the locals would secure passports.

This explains the continuing popularity of the wooden hull ships, locally known as kumpits, for the operators of these ships do not require paperwork.

"Government can help them get the necessary paperwork for them to get their passports. With that, they can easily go to Malaysia for work and trade," he says.

Wahab, on the other hand, has high hopes for trade.

He says the increasing travel between the Philippines and Malaysia has made a number of Malaysian businessmen interested in the prospects of doing business in the country.

He says a group has recently arrived and was exploring the possibility of bringing in local goods to Malaysia, which augurs well for the local entrepreneurs.

Wahab says Malaysians are interested in local cosmetics, particularly whitening products, that are cheaper to manufacture here than in Malaysia. He himself is the distributor in Malaysia of RDL Cosmetics.

There are also big buyers of local snack foods, like chips and saltine crackers, and fresh mangoes.

Filipinos, on the other hand, usually bring home laundry soap, bath soap, milk and instant noodles from Malaysia.

Tan says trade could go up several notches if local manufacturers will seriously look at developing products that will find a ready market in Malaysia.

With the passenger and trade routes already in place, it is just a matter of looking for the right products to fit the market, especially with the BIMP-Eaga firmly established.

And then, the centuries-old trade between the two countries will enter yet another productive phase.

Francorp Philippines marks 10 years

TEN YEARS AGO, THREE FILipino entrepreneurs, Samie Lim, Manny Siggaoat and Bing Sibal Limjoco, went to the US to scout for opportunities that would help boost the growth of local businesses. They found Francorp USA, a top US franchise consulting firm, inked a partnership with them and brought it into the Philippines to pioneer franchise development and fast-track the growth of local businesses via franchising.

Francorp USA, with headquarters in Chicago, Illinois, and more than 21 offices worldwide, brings to the Philippines over 25 years of its international experience and combined this with 50 years of solid retail business background of Lim, Siggaoat and Limjoco. Thus, Francorp Philippines was born.

Over the years, Francorp Philippines has been helping Filipino entrepreneurs grow their business via the franchise formula and since then, have launched hundreds of successful stories in franchising—including the likes of Jollibee, Max, Goldilocks, Bench, Pancake House, Potato Corner, and Candy Corner. Francorp Philippines has produced to date over 100 franchises, many of which are well-respected brands that have reaped global success and numerous awards in the industry.

Marking its 10th year anniversary, Francorp Philippines staged a dinner-celebration at the Ayala Museum last Jan. 31. Well attended by the who's who in the franchise industry, the elegant evening became a very fitting tribute and thanksgiving to Francorp Philippines' clients who were recognized for their phenomenal success, nationally and globally.

Francorp International president and Francorp Mexico CEO Ramon Vinay flew to Manila to grace the occasion and together with Trade Secretary Peter Favila and Francorp Philippines chair Samie Lim (PCCI president), conferred on 26 top clients the Francorp International's Award of Distinction. Excellence, passion, quality, competitiveness and consistency in running their franchises as well as bringing their franchises at world class performance levels earned for these top companies the Hall of Fame Awards and for the top-notchers in food, retail and service franchising.

Awarded were some of the best names in the country's franchising sector today such as Tony Tan Caktiong, chairman/CEO of Jollibee Foods Corp. who was named World Entrepreneur of the Year, and Hall of Famers Max's Restaurant, Goldilocks Bakeshop, Bench, Pancake House, Potato Corner, and Candy Corner. Tan Caktiong as the top honoree for the evening gave a very heartwarming speech on how Francorp had guided him during his early years as a fast-food company, the special relations he had with Francorp USA's chair Don Boroian and how this history became part of Jollibee's success today.

Other top honorees were Penshoppe, Kamiseta, Bayo, Islands Souvenirs, Netopia, David's Salon and Reyes Haircutters.

Skype, Google out to snatch more revenues

By Abigail L. Ho

FIXED LINE OPERATORS HAVE TO find more ways to cash in on their infrastructure as Skype and Google continue to eat at their revenues with "novel" forms of communication among online communities.

According to a report by IT and media advisory firm Analysys, companies such as Skype and Google that provide non-traditional telephony services have the potential to strip away as much as $18.2 billion in revenue from traditional telecom operators.

This amount should be roughly equivalent to 5.4 percent of the global fixed telephony market by 2011.

Skype and Google both offer free PC-to-PC calls, a service that bypasses the public switch telephone network and is now taking away local and international voice call minutes from fixed line operators.

With Skype's free PC-to-PC calling service, for example, a person in the Philippines can talk to a loved one abroad without having to pay overseas call charges.

A user only needs a good enough Internet connection, a headset and microphone, and the downloadable Skype program.

The webcam option allows people from both ends of the line to see each other while talking—something that fixed line telephony cannot offer.

"The usage associated with these services, while predominantly incremental at present, will increasingly substitute for traditional communications services," stated the Analysys report titled Non-traditional Players in Communications Markets.

Report author Stephen Sale said online communities and portals presented new communication means, what with their being on a "middle ground" between one-to-one and one-to-many interactions.

"The success of many of these services calls into question established ideas of user behavior and suggests alternative means of addressing the communications market," he said.

Food firm makes bet on food safety

By Joel V. Nigos

IS YOUR WATER SAFE FOR drinking? Are your noodles, cupcakes, bread and milk fortified? Are you sure of the protein, fat, salt, carbohydrate and fiber contents as indicated in the product labels? Are you getting the right nutrients from the food you buy?

These maybe are some of the questions you ask whenever you buy your water for drinking, poultry and marine products such as chicken, pork and fish, even the noodles and other groceries from the supermarket.

Cancer survivor

Pinky Tobiano, president and CEO of QualiBet Testing Services Inc., says microorganisms are present in almost all stages of the food process—from harvesting of vegetables and handling of the produce, farming of marine products, raising of pork and other poultry up to the final preparation of food in the homes.

Fish, for instance, can contain antibiotic residue, salmonella, e-coli and malachite green which in turn could cause diseases. The aqua feeds used may even contain harmful substances which are not good for human consumption.

That's why it's very important to test the quality and safety of these products.

QualiBet, short for quality is better, is a food, water, pharmaceutical and veterinary testing facility. It is also the newest and most modern testing facility in the Philippines managed by US-trained chemists, pharmacists, microbiologists and pathologists.

Cancer survivor

Tobiano is a cancer survivor who has made it her personal advocacy to ensure food safety for all and not just for a privileged few.

It was three years ago when she was diagnosed with throat cancer (stage 2 papillary carcinoma). She underwent a delicate operation that took out the cancer.

"After fighting cancer for the past three years, the best way I see to give back to society is through my gift of being a chemist. I'm neither a charismatic speaker nor an artist, to use my knowledge as a chemist is the only way I can help other people."

Tobiano is a BS Chemistry graduate of UST. She also took the "Owners President Management Course" at Harvard. This prepared her to start QualiBet which she founded eight months ago.

"It's probably out of my desire to create awareness for safe water, vegetable produce, marine and poultry products, proper nutrition labeling, components of cosmetics, components of baby food, and everything a chemist can analyze that's why I started QualiBet," she shares.

The water we use for drinking, she explains, can cause a lot of diseases. "It's not enough that our drinking water had undergone filtration. Handling is as important. We should also check regularly the container that we use, where we store it, the hose, etc."

As for proper nutrition labeling, she says, "It's not enough to say low cholesterol, low fat or low of this or that, it should not be qualitative. It should be quantitative." Proper nutrition labeling means the product should contain what the labels say.

Government-accredited

"I believe it's the right of every Filipino consumer to know the nutritional facts of what they buy. So being a responsible manufacturer, they should provide us with the right labels."

QualiBet has been actively working with various government agencies such as the Departments of Health, Trade and Industry, and Agriculture in the testing of farm, marine and poultry produce.

In fact, these government agencies have accredited QualiBet as a testing center. Tobiano explains that though these agencies have their own testing facilities, they are sometimes swamped with various agricultural, aquatic and animal products to be tested, thus, the need for a third party to do the testing.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, an agency of the agriculture department, for one, recently tapped the services of QualiBet to test marine products for antibiotic residues and other harmful chemicals such as chloramphenicol and nitrofuran and several other tests that include checking for e-coli and salmonella and other potentially hazardous contaminants.

She points out that this is very significant because the Philippines is an exporter of various marine products such as farm-grown bangus, tilapia and prawns and carageenan from seaweed as well as various agricultural products.

"If you want to capture the export market, your products must meet all the quality tests of importing countries," Tobiano stresses. "When your products passed the tests of QualiBet, your products would surely pass the export market because our testing facilities are up to international standards."

QualiBet is a member of the American Association of Analytical Chemists and also ISO 9002-certified.

She adds that these accreditations helped advance QualiBet's advocacy.

Tobiano says that they are currently focusing their efforts and targeting water refilling stations, fast-food chains, hotel and restaurants, hospitals, property management companies as well as cosmetic manufacturers. "Cosmetics may also contain harmful substances. That's why we're offering our services to them. An airline is also talking to us right now to do tests on the food they serve on the plane."

Focus market

She adds that though they have the most modern facilities for testing, QualiBet's charges are still 20 to 30 percent lower compared to other companies that offer the same services.

"This is so because QualiBet for me is not just a business but a personal advocacy. In fact, for as low as P500, ordinary households can have the quality of their drinking water tested."

With her own experience with cancer and the realization of how it's important to ensure food safety, Tobiano says that she wants it to be her legacy even just for her children to make sure that what they eat and the products that they use are safe.

"You know what's my vision, I look forward to the time when I go to a fast-food chain and I would know how much calories I would get when I eat this burger or fries," she concludes.

TOBIANO, president and CEO, QualiBet Testing Inc.
ROMY HOMILLADA

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BUSINESS Monday

Online stock trading firm offers starter account for students

IN A RADICAL MOVE TO BROADEN the retail investor base in the Philippines, listed firm CitisecOnline (COL) is now wooing students to invest in the stock market with a special package. Shifting away from the traditional market of high net worth individuals, the firm has been successfully using its proprietary online trading game that simulates the stock market to interest young investors in the bourse.

Conrado Bate, president of CitisecOnline, relates that the encouraging results of its recent online stock trading tournament, called the MBA Investment Challenge, among graduate business students nationwide spurred the listed firm to launch a starter account and lower the minimum investment from P25,000 to P5,000 for students with a valid student ID. COL 101, as the starter account is called, hopes to woo investors from among university, graduate and post-graduate students.

He relates that the 1st CitisecOnline MBA Investment Challenge launched in November 2006 and concluded mid-February 2007, attracted 200 graduate business students from 20 universities nationwide who actively traded listed stocks using a game that simulates the market.

Participants were from top educational institutions in Metro Manila such as AIM, Ateneo, DLSU, JRU, PSBA, PUP, UA&P and UP as well as premier schools from the provinces such as Ateneo de Cagayan-Xavier University, Saint Louis University, and Southwestern University Cebu.

The winners were a graduate student specializing in IT from Polytechnic University of the Philippines and a graduate business student from De La Salle Professional School. Bate notes: "Our experience has shown that tech-savvy college students have a strong potential to invest and succeed in the stock market."

Topnotcher Ronald Abas, a Master of Science in Information Technology student at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP), was in the early years of his graduate studies when he learned about CitisecOnline. He was able to practice his theories and strategies, risk-free through CitisecOnline's Virtual Tycoon game that he subsequently shifted to the real thing. With the help of research, both in fundamentals and technical analysis provided by CitisecOnline, he was able to spot profit-making opportunities which led him to make substantial earnings and financed 70 percent of the construction of his house in Batangas.

At the end of the tournament in mid-February this year, Abas had the highest portfolio value or contest points and won a P25,000 trading account from CitisecOnline.

Second placer Rocky Laurel, a third year MBA student from De La Salle, is also a real-life stock investor. He mentioned that he was able to quickly capitalize on investment opportunities through CitisecOnline's online tools such as the real-time ticker, the streaming market data, and quotes. He believes that he was able to achieve a net portfolio gain of 71 percent for the period by being able to quickly react to market demand and supply because of the information provided by CitisecOnline. .

Mark Bordeos and Hans Lim, both Master of Science in Management students at the University of Asia and the Pacific (UAP), placed third and fourth, respectively. Bordeos says he has long been interested in bourse trading since he comes from a family of stock market traders. Lim made use of his interest in technical analysis and combined this with short-term trading to emerge in the top five. Both participants were able to maximize the charts and technical information provided by CitisecOnline during the tournament.

Other participants of the MBA Investment Challenge relate that the tournament provided them a better understanding of the market. Mary Michelle Chia Barsanas of Ateneo de Cagayan wrote CitisecOnline: "I learned that investing in the stock exchange can provide better returns than investing in a bank."

According to Bate, CitisecOnline realized that many students are interested in investing in the stock market but are not able to open a regular account because of financial limitations. "We do want to open the doors of stock market investing for them," Bate says.

He even encourages parents to open for their children a COL 101 starter account in lieu of cash as a graduation gift. Those interested in learning more about the stock market are invited to attend the "Learn to Invest Successfully in the Philippine Stock Market" seminar on March 14, Wednesday, 5:30 to 8:30 pm at the AIM Conference Center in Makati. For more information, visit CitisecOnline's website at www.citisecon-line.com or call 633-7777.

Term of corporate officers

Corporate Securities Info
Raul Palabrica

THIS IS THE TIME OF THE YEAR WHEN most corporations hold their annual stockholders' meeting.

Like the coming midterm elections, the yearly exercise gives the stockholders, regardless of the size of their holdings, the opportunity to choose the men and women who will run their company.

For stock corporations, those chosen are called directors; for nonstock corporations, they're described as trustees or administrators.

Unless the articles of incorporation or by-laws provide for other requirements, all it takes to qualify for a director's position is ownership of at least one share of stock.

In the case of nonstock corporations, membership in the organization is the minimum prerequisite for election as trustee.

The general rule is, directors and trustees shall hold office for one year and until their successors are elected and qualified.

If their term expires and no qualified replacements have been elected, the incumbent officials shall remain in office until their successors are eventually selected.

Exception

The one-year term is not, however, etched in stone as far as nonstock corporations are concerned.

Sec. 92 of the Corporation Code gives these corporations leeway in determining the terms of office of their trustees.

It reads: "Unless otherwise provided in the articles of incorporation or by-laws, the board of trustees of nonstock corporations, which may be more than 15 in number, shall ... classify themselves that the term of office of one-third of the number shall expire every year; and subsequent elections of trustees comprising one-third of the board of trustees shall be held annually and trustees so elected shall have a term of three years."

The interpretation of this rather innocuous provision was the subject of a query to the Securities and Exchange Commission by a sports association that organized itself into a nonstock corporation.

The association asked if it can amend its by-laws in such a way that the election of the members of its board of trustees is held every four years instead of once a year, as originally agreed.

Apparently, the association believes that changing their trustees every year is disadvantageous to their efforts to develop and promote their favorite sport in the country.

The members would like their trustees to stay put for four continuous years without being distracted by a yearly election ritual.

The association also wanted to amend its by-laws so that the board of trustees meets only every four months in lieu of the original once-a-month schedule.

Choice of term

The SEC stated that the "unless otherwise provided" clause in Sec. 92 authorizes nonstock corporations to decide on the term of office of its trustees through their articles of incorporation or by-laws.

Three things though have to be taken into consideration by the association (or any nonstock corporation for that) if it wants to amend its by-laws for that purpose.

First, a lifetime or unlimited term is not allowed. Why? Because it "absolutely deprives other stockholders or members the opportunity to participate in the management of the corporation."

Second, the term should not at any one time exceed five years.

In setting this limit, the SEC took its cue from Sec. 7 of the code which states that if the exclusive right to be voted for in the election of directors is granted to some stockholders, "it must be for a limited period not to exceed five years subject to the approval of the SEC."

The idea is, after five years, it's only fair that the other members are given a chance to run the affairs of the corporation.

Third, any amendment of the by-laws shall take effect only upon its approval by the SEC.

Meeting goes on

While the association was given the go-signal to amend its by-laws to allow a four-year term for its trustees, the SEC stressed that this should not be taken to mean that the association can skip its annual membership meeting.

That activity should go on as scheduled even if no election for trustees is held during the proposed four-year term.

With regard to the association's plan to amend its by-laws to make the board of trustees meet every four months, the SEC likewise did not interpose any objection to that move.

The right of the association to make that change is clear from Sec. 53 of the code which states that "regular meetings of the board of directors or trustees of every corporation shall be held monthly, unless the by-laws provide otherwise." (*Feedback to rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph*)

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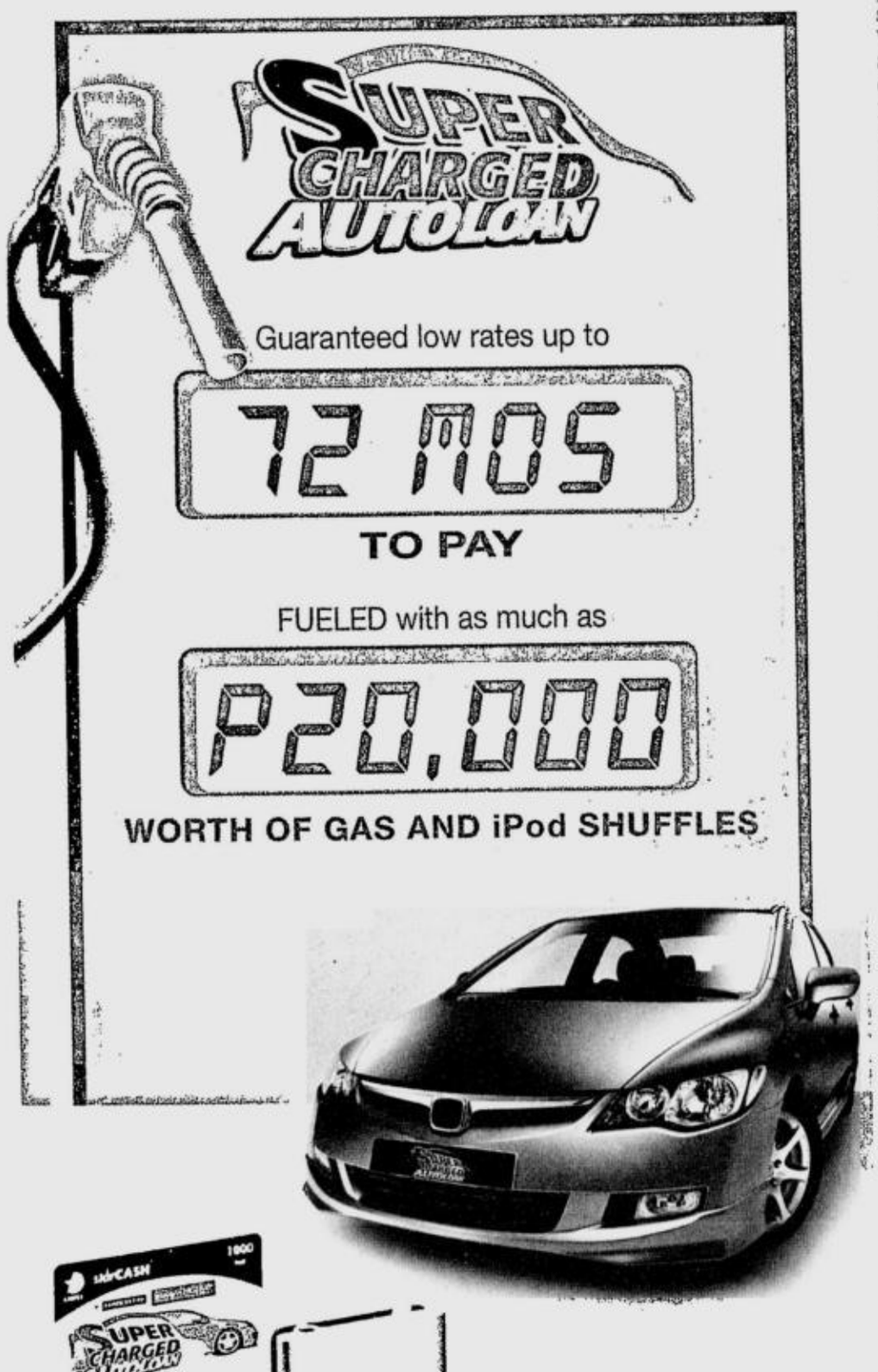

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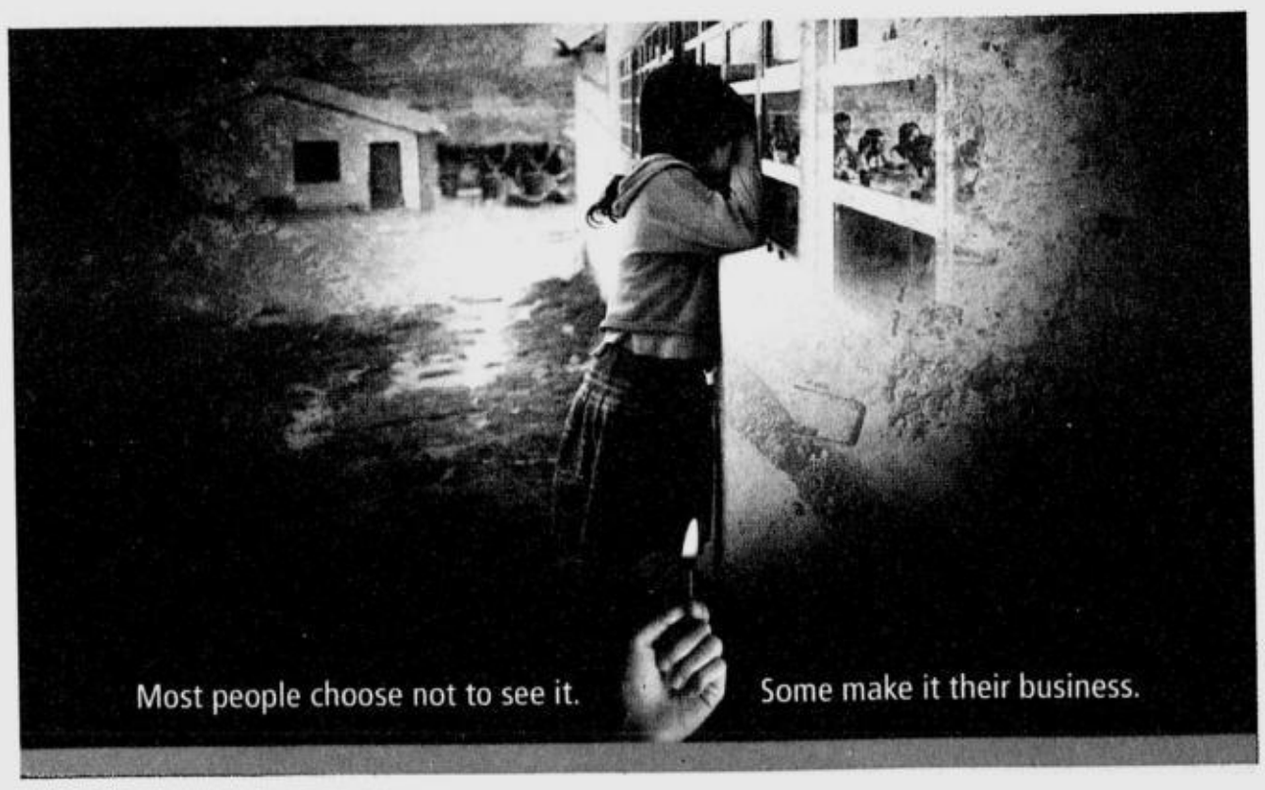

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From an NGO to a bank serving the poor

Microfinance firm takes Grameen model a step further

By Nina Catherine Calleja
Inquirer Southern Luzon

SAN PABLO CITY—BACK IN THE early 1980s, people thought Dr. Jaime Aristotle Alip's proposal to establish an institution providing loans for the poorest farmers would never get off the ground.

But Alip proved them wrong.

The Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) Inc., a nongovernment organization (NGO) Alip founded in 1986, has gone on to mobilize the landless farmers in its area and lift them out of poverty.

CARD Inc. has since expanded, establishing other institutions such as CARD-Mutually Reinforcing Institutions (MRI), the CARD Mutual Benefit Association (CARD MBA), the CARD-MRI Development Institute (CMDI) and the CARD Business Development Services (CARD-BDS).

Alip said that the five institutions, including Card Inc., reinforce one another, sustaining their efforts to assist the poorest among the poor by providing microfinance and other special development services, such as credit with education.

"Sole financial support is not enough to (help) the poor," he said.

At present, CARD-MRI has 232 NGO branches, 50 office units, 12 banks and 4 head offices throughout the country.

As of December 2006, the institutions had served almost half a million clients. Alip said the rate of clients who were able to repay their loans remained high at 98.5 percent.

He also said that the clients they had served 10 years ago were no longer poor.

"Many of our microfinance borrowers have increased their business activities," he claimed. "They are now employers."

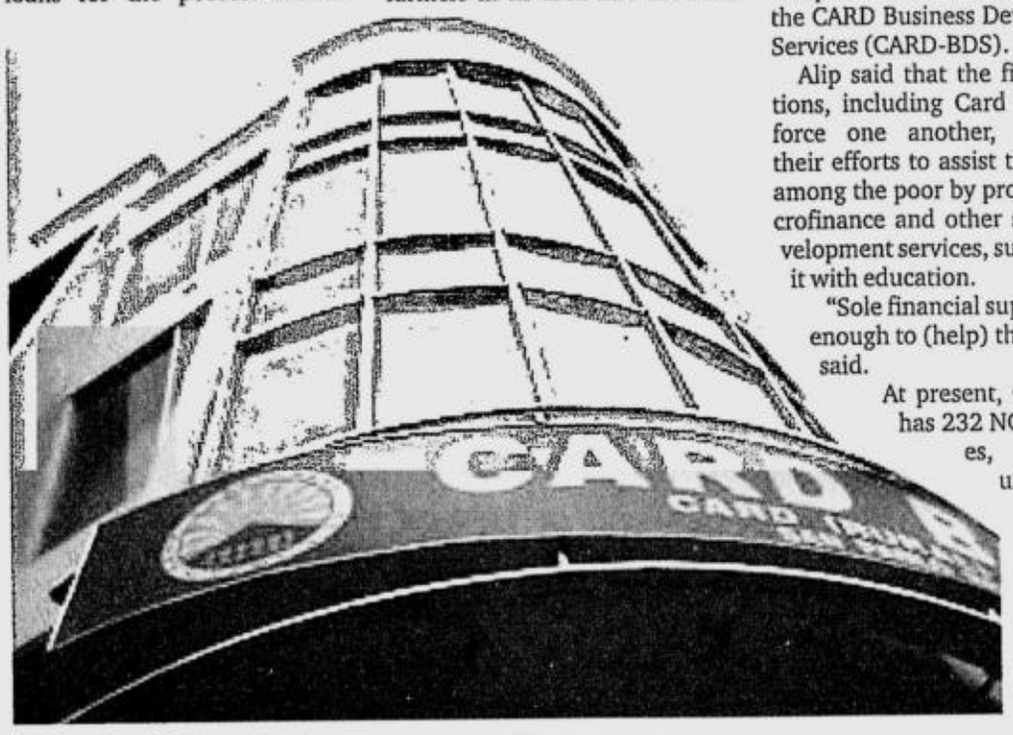
A pioneer of Grameen banking in the country, the CARD-MRI has established the groundwork for microfinance in the country.

The Grameen movement

Alip met Dr. Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen movement and 2006 Nobel Peace Prize awardee, during the latter's tour of several rural development projects in the Philippines in 1983.

"We had the opportunity to discuss (Yunus') projects," Alip said. "And, he told me he was giving loans to the poorest among the poor in Bangladesh."

FROM AN NGO/ B3-3



THE HEAD-QUARTERS of CARD in San Pablo City

DR. JAIME Aristotle Alip

NINA CATHERINE CALLEJA/SOUTHERN LUZON

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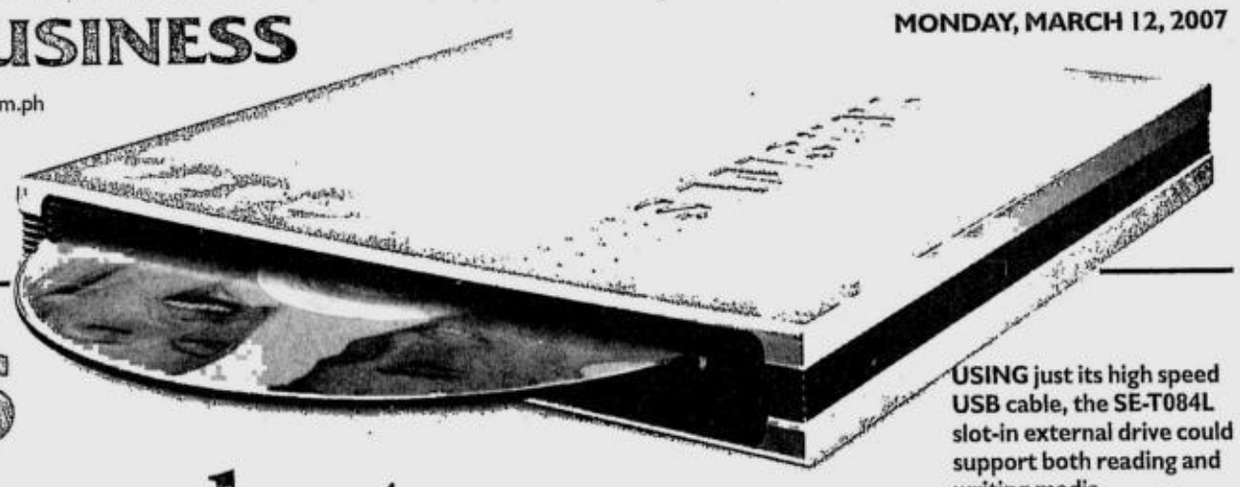
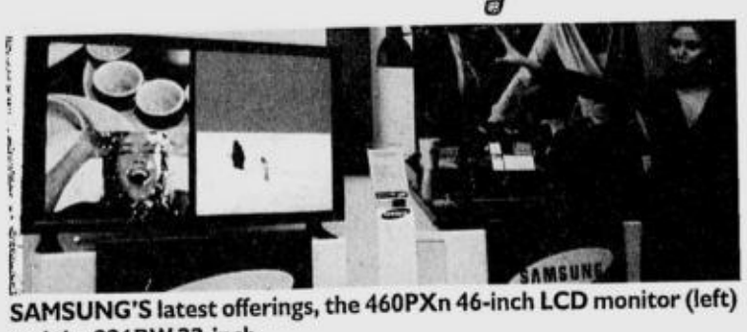


USING just its high speed USB cable, the SE-T084L slot-in external drive could support both reading and writing media

Samsung unveils industry-first IT products



SAMSUNG'S latest offerings, the 460PXn 46-inch LCD monitor (left) and the 226BW 22-inch

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS last week unveiled a number of industry-first products in the printer, LCD monitor, and personal computer enhancement categories.

Bannering these premium IT products was the Samsung CLP-300, considered the world's smallest and lightest color laser printer.

"The introduction of this compact laser printer marks another milestone for Samsung as it further revolutionizes the color laser printer by making it more affordable and an ideal desktop companion for individual use," said Bong Wan Kim, Samsung Electronics Philippines vice president for IT.

THE CLP-300 is quite portable and a space saver thanks to its 13.6 kg weight and compact dimension

Sporting a conventional cuboid design, the CLP-300 weighs just 13.6 kg and offers a footprint of a fully opened magazine, thus helping save valuable desk space and making this printer easier to move around.

Innovative design

The rest of CLP-300's innovative design are not readily seen: Pull down its front cover and one will discover that instead of having a large and unwieldy cartridge (that most laser printers use today), it now uses four cylindrical toner containers—each about the size of a sardines can—that fit neatly into the machine.

Just like what is now found in most inkjet printers, the CLP-300's four color coded containers can be replaced individually, resulting in greater cost savings.

But while Samsung would love to boast about its fast printing speed (up to four pages a minute for color and 16 pages a minute for black and white printing) and quiet operation (less than 49 decibels while printing, which is more like being inside a library), its P16,500 price tag would be more than enough to attract market attention.

Priced to challenge the home and small office market's color inkjet monopoly, the Samsung CLP-300 series provides an affordable alternative to monochrome laser printers and color inkjets.

External drive

Another Samsung product that should catch market attention is its latest slot-in slim external DVD drive.

The SE-T084L is the world's first external drive that could write as well as read while sourcing its power from its high-speed USB port (it also has an AC adaptor).

Apart from accepting the usual 12-cm disc, it could also accept the 8-cm format—another industry-first—which makes this drive compatible with disc camcorders that use this particular media.

Samsung also said that this P7,500 external drive supports LightScribe technology that enables its user to engrave personalized label on the surface of the disc.

Strong and consistent player

Being a strong player in the LCD market, Samsung also unveiled its two latest LCD monitor models.

Samsung's SyncMaster 226BW (priced P26,000) features a 22-inch widescreen display that allows its user to multitask—open several applications and display them at the same time.

It features a lightning-fast response time that will make it particularly attractive to gamers who seek large, true-to-life images and vivid gaming experience.

Samsung also added that the 226BW (as well as its other 19-, 20- and 22-inch models) has recently been awarded the Windows Vista Premium certification that would allow these display products to accommodate Windows Vista user interface.

The 46-inch 460PXn LCD monitor, on the other hand, is designed for use in corporate and commercial digital signage applications (such as those found in airports, malls, restaurants and commercial buildings).

This P150,000 monitor features 800:1 contrast ratio, 1,366 x 768 resolution, and 500 cd/m2 brightness, making this particular display model among the brightest and sharpest in the market today.

Apart from having an S-video, Picture-in-Picture and Picture-by-Picture capability, RS232C (a standard serial interfacing for PC), NTSC/PAL/Secam format support, the 460PXn is equipped with Samsung's MagicNet software.

This technology offers businesses all the benefits of digital signage without the need for a dedicated PC for each display (an example would be a retail store that showcases its latest apparel on one set of 460PXn displays while items that are on sale on another and a store directory on yet another set of displays).

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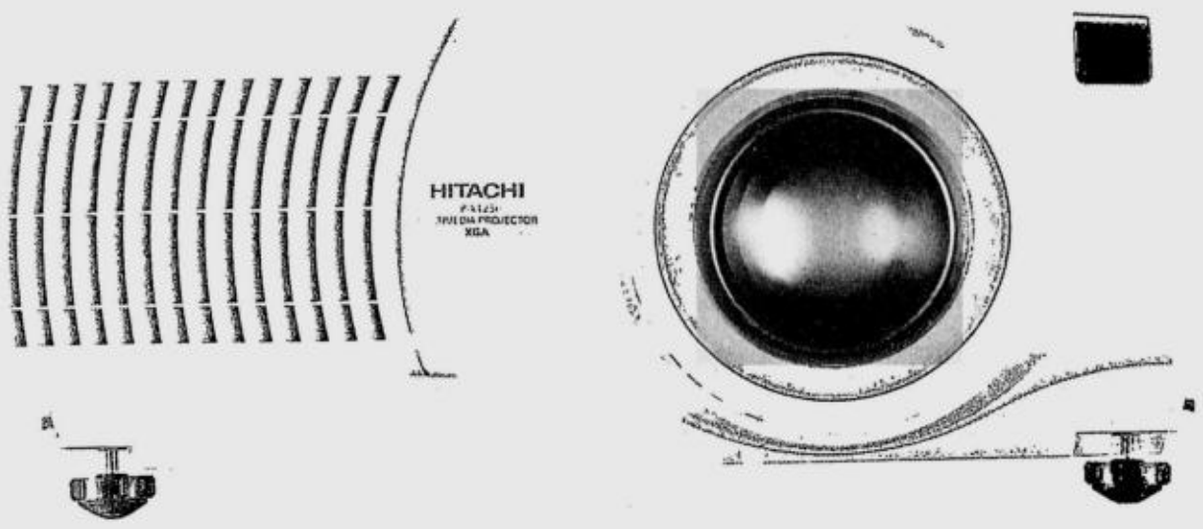

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SM PRIME HOLDINGS INC. through the SM Foundation Inc. turned over to the Department of Education 15 schoolhouses and a renovated three-classroom school building under the DepEd's Adopt-a-School Program.

The elementary schoolbuildings are in Montes, Ingore, Nabitasan, Ticud and Obrero in Iloilo; Bagong Bayan and Paliparan in Dasmariñas, Cavite; Josefa Carino in Baguio City; Mambuaya and Consolacion in Cagayan de Oro City; San Vicente and Pandacaqui in Pampanga; Padre Burgos in Quezon; and Dalahican and Ransohan in Lucena City.

The renovated three-classroom high school building is located in Marilao, Bulacan.

Each two-classroom schoolhouse is provided with two toilets with running water, 100 schooldesks, blackboards, teacher's table and chair.

SM Foundations undertakes a yearly maintenance of these schoolhouses. The total cost of these classroom is estimated at P5.25 million.

In a statement, Department of Education, Secretary Jesli Lapus said: "Providing adequate school buildings for the growing student population is a challenge that DepEd cannot face alone with its limited resources. We are grateful for SM Prime Holding's contribution of more classrooms for our students."

SM Foundation executive director Debbie Sy assured the DepEd that even with this recent turnover, SM will continue to support the Adopt-a-School Program. She said that staff of the Foundation are currently assessing new locations for classrooms based on the recommendations of the DepEd taking into consideration that an ideal classroom should accommodate 35-40 students only.

SM Foundation has four areas of advocacy: education through college scholarships and the construction of SM schoolhouses in various sites upon the recommendation of the Department of Education; health program through medical missions, mobile clinics and hospital activity centers; mall-based outreach program and religious community programs. The Foundation has recently partnered with the Gawad Kalinga project of the Couples for Christ in putting up 87 houses for the poor in Mandaluyong City.

In partnership with ABS-CBN e-Media, the Foundation in 2005-2006 donated educational TV infrastructure composed of TV sets, video, CD/DVD players and educational materials to 60 public elementary schools in Cavite, Batangas and Manila.

The Foundation has likewise donated water tanks in the Juan Sumulong Elementary School and Cecilio Apostol Elementary School in Manila; repaired and refurbished pieces of classroom furniture in Ma-a High School in Davao and the Araullo High School in Manila.

A library in Nereo Joaquin Memorial High School in Biñan, Laguna was put up through a donation from the Foundation. In 2006, 121,000 books were distributed to 1,400 public schools, barangays and day care centers.

Felicidad Sy, matriarch of the SY family and Debbie Sy, executive director of the SM Foundation Inc. formally signed the turnover document to Undersecretary Teodosio Sangil. Witnessing the turnover were officials of the Department of Education led by Undersecretaries Antonio Inocentes and Franklin Sunga and SM Foundation Director Carmen Linda Atayde.

Pinoy engineer builds railways to the world

By Gino Dormiendo

A CIVIL ENGINEERING GRADUATE, THE young Joseph Allan Dilay had set his sights on getting a job for construction project overseas.

This was sometime in 1978, a year after he obtained his diploma from the Batangas State University, with four years spent at the Mapua Institute of Technology, when he found himself working as project engineer of a public works department in Bahrain.

His first Middle East job would fortuitously kick off a successful career in railway and mass transit, with a string of projects waiting in various parts of the world.

Today, Dilay, 50, sits as chair of the group of companies that he put up and proudly bears his initials: JAD Group of Companies. Being involved in various transit-railway and civil engineering projects here and abroad, he divides his time in various sites, making sure that every project gets his full attention. His consulting firm, JAD and Associates, boasts a highly qualified team of engineering professionals backed up by an impressive track record in the design, construction and maintenance of rail transport systems.

A few years ago, Dilay took one of the biggest challenges of his career as the track work engineer and consultant for the two lines of the Metro Manila Light Railway Transit. Line 1 involved a 15.4-km elevated line with 18 stations running north-south of Metro Manila while Line 2 is a 13.8-km almost totally elevated system running east-west through Metro Manila . JAD and Associates served as sub-consultant to Tonichi (of Japan) for Line 1 and design consultant for Line 2, involving the modern segmental viaduct system, the first of its kind in the country. The jobs completed satisfactorily, he amply proved himself for having fully met the challenge.

"The Filipino's skill, talent and expertise are definitely at par with the best of the world," says Dilay, a registered professional engineer in the United States and Canada, and an affiliate member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Association of Professional Engineers in British Columbia, Canada .

JOSEPH Allan Dilay

Among the rail projects he was actively involved in, in the United States, were the Light Rail Transit Systems in Denver, Colorado, the Las Vegas People Mover, Long Beach Transit, Los Angeles Light Rail Transit and Metro Rail Lines.

In Taiwan, Dilay was involved in tunnel construction for Chungho Line and underground stations for Hsintien Line in downtown Taipei. Another project in Taipei involved the design of a 12-km track heavy rail system.

Dilay's Genials Trading and Contracting Company is the lead member of joint venture which signed a system maintenance contract for the Manila LRT 1 system with the Light Rail Transit Authority on May 24, 2004 until Sept. 30, 2006, which includes 64 Belgian and 28 Korean-made vehicles as well as covering track, power supply and other rail-related systems. The contract, however, had expired and the JAD Group is very eager to participate once more in the forthcoming bidding of the maintenance contract.

Genials Trading is more than qualified to do the job. It is the recipient, in 2005, of the "Most Outstanding Rail Transit Employer," award jointly conferred by the Agora Institute, The Philippine Marketing Practitioners Association, the Asia-Pacific Global Awards and Business Asia Magazine. The award is testament to the Company's superior value of offering, product quality and strong consumer orientation.

With 20 years of railway experience behind him, Dilay has realized he needed to grow professionally. He needed to enroll in review courses in civil engineering at California State University in Los Angeles, and track work installation course also in LA. As a result, he is a licensed civil and trackwork engineer both in the US and Canada. He was also given a civil engineering license in Canada after passing the qualifying examinations.

This year, Dilay has embarked on supplying skilled manpower and management to Canada, via his Jadcan Services Inc. based in Burnaby, Canada.

His company is also involved in sub-contracting services in the field of Civil Engineering and Construction.

His sights are now set to contribute his talent in railway system in Vancouver, with the help of dedicated, experienced and globally competent engineering and construction professionals. His goal is to elevate Pinoy engineers to finally becoming world-class professionals.

The Great Pinoy Dream, as prospects augur well for the engineer who dreamed of the world, is well on its way to becoming a reality.

Ling Nam opens first franchise store

LING NAM, THE CHINESE NOODle house that started in 1950, recently inaugurated its first franchise store located along Banaue, Quezon City.

Tri-Mark Foods Inc., master franchisor of Ling Nam, awarded the franchise business to the D' Noodle Shop Inc. composed of Raymund Co, Wilson Tan, Willie Go, Ramon Ng and Charlie Chen.

"The company was established primarily for the Ling Nam franchise business. We've been friends for a long time but this is the first time that we ventured into a business together. And Ling Nam is our only choice.

Aside from the additional earnings, we opened the store for sentimental reasons," Go, co-owner of the D' Noodle Shop Inc. said.

"Ling Nam is practically part of our childhood. The brand is close to our hearts. I think it's just the right time that we pass the tradition to our children. We want them to grow up appreciating authentic Chinese food," he relates.

Tri-Mark Foods Inc. president Peter Fung shares that the opening of the Banaue store is part of the company's aggressive efforts of getting back into market.

"It's about time. Our consumers waited long enough and now, the company is experiencing an exciting rebirth. After the Banaue store, we are soon welcoming two new branches into the Ling Nam family. These are Ling Nam Liberty Center and Ling Nam Greenhills," he adds.

Ling Nam's opening of its Banaue store makes the restaurant's 56-year-old tradition of serving authentic Chinese dishes more accessible to consumers.

From an NGO...

From page B3-1

"I actually laughed at his idea at that time," he added. "I told myself, this man was fooling me because Bangladesh is the poorest country in the world. So how can the poorest among the poor pay the loans?"

Alip said that in 1988, he went to Bangladesh to see for himself what Yunus' Grameen movement was all about.

"I was surprised to see that it was really happening in Bangladesh," Alip said. "The poor in that country could really repay their loans because of their discipline and creativity."

When Alip came back to the Philippines, he was eager to start working with his staff at CARD Inc.

In no time, Alip and his staff achieved a measure of success in helping the poor though the opportunities they helped create.

Difficult days

It was in 1978 when Alip was first exposed to countryside development when he joined the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), then the largest grant-making NGO in the country.

"I had seen the need to prioritize the landless rural workers who did not have any assets and were paid by their hourly labor," he said. "I had felt that this sector was so marginalized."

He said the poor farmers should be given credit and the opportunity to productively work and earn as most of them have the skills and perseverance.

Alip, with other social development practitioners, formed the backbone of the organization in 1986, with only P20 as initial fund and an old typewriter to get things moving. The group held office in a small space beside the public market in this city.

Realizing the need for financial support, Alip submitted proposals to funding agencies.

In 1988, two Japanese agencies accepted his proposal and funded the initial operation of the NGO.

Alip recounted the days he spent in Japan to speak to the heads of the agencies.

"I had no money to stay in a hotel," he recalled. "Some of my friends financed my plane ticket and allowance. So I slept at the airport for three days."

His Japanese friend later found out what he had to go through.

"Perhaps because of pity, his company accepted my proposal and provided $10,000," he said.

The CARD team immediately started the livelihood assistance program for landless coconut farmers in this city.

CARD Bank

In December 1995, the board of directors of CARD Inc. began the transformation of the NGO into a bank to tap the commercial loan market.

CARD Inc. obtained from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas the license to operate as a rural bank in San Pablo City, with an initial paid-up capital of P5 million ($167,000) in August 1997. Four of the 13 CARD NGO branches were then converted into CARD banks.

CARD Inc. became the first microfinance NGO that was transformed into a formal financial intermediary.

Alip said they continued to challenge traditional banking. Owners of the bank and the clients share the dividends of the profit. The loans are not based on any collateral or legally enforceable contracts.

According to Grameen banking, loans are based on "trust," not on legal procedures and system. Also, a client may be a shareholder who has a chance to be a representative in the board.

Other institutions

Aside from the NGO and the bank, other institutions were also established to help clients and members.

The CARD Mutual Benefit Association, an insurance institution, was founded in April 1994 to extend financial assistance to its members through death benefits, medical subsidy, pension and other loan redemption packages.

Alip said the CARD MBA will eventually be registered as a full-blown insurance company as soon as capitalization requirements are met.

As most of its clients need nonfinancial services to establish and expand their businesses, the CARD BDS Center was also established.

Alip said the center assists clients in providing business technology and product development as well as links to suppliers.

The center also provides training, technical assistance and consultancy on market access and alternative financing mechanisms.

On the other hand, the CMDI was instituted to provide nondegree and degree courses to managers, staff and members specializing on microfinance.

"These institutions are interdependent, with one common goal," Alip said.

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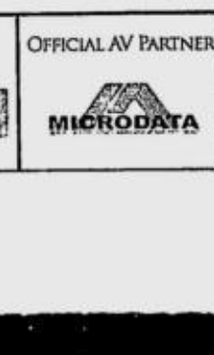

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BUSINESS Monday

Shift in market to hit cell phone chips makers

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA—Cell phones are increasingly with a single chip to handle all their internal workings, which may spell trouble for the companies supplying more specialized chips.

These makers include RF Micro Devices Inc., STMicroelectronics NV and Skyworks Solutions Inc. However, the news is good for Texas Instruments Inc., a leader in the single-chip movement.

Single-chip phones offer fewer features but have risen in popularity, especially in developing countries, where prices matter more and sales are brisk. Projections suggest that such phones could represent 20 percent of the total handset shipments by the end of 2008.

"It's where the industry is moving at a noticeable pace," said Cody Acree, a semiconductor analyst at Stifel Nicolaus. "It's not something that's off in the future."

The move to a single-chip architecture is a natural progression for the semiconductor market and follows a similar track in the personal-computer industry, where companies like Intel Corp. are developing chips with built-in graphics capabilities.

"Certainly people want fancy phones, but the bread and butter is at the low end," said Roger Kay, president and founder of market research firm Endpoint Technologies Associates. "Integration is always a threat to those that make discrete parts."

ThinkEquity Partners analyst Michael Burton said that he expects 20 percent of new cell phones to contain a single chip by the end of 2008, and the gains won't be confined to low-end phones.

Burton said Texas Instruments' LoCosto solution has gained meaningful traction among the top cell phone makers.

Dallas-based Texas Instruments agrees a single-chip architecture won't only be for cheap handsets. Alain Mutricy, vice president and general manager of Cellular Systems at Texas Instruments, said it also will find its way into midrange cell phones, largely in emerging markets.

Today there are 2.8 billion cell phone subscribers, with that number expected to reach 4 billion in 2010, noted Mutricy.

Michael Markowitz, a spokesperson at STMicroelectronics, maker of discrete components for cell phones, said that, by the time midrange cell phones start incorporating a single-chip architecture, the company should have a product available.

The STMicroelectronics spokesperson said the trend toward a single chip has a "minimal impact" since most of the phones using the single chip are in areas of the market his company doesn't go after.

Brian Daly, vice president of marketing at Skyworks, said in an e-mail statement that for the "foreseeable future" a single-chip architecture will only be needed in the low-end "voice-centric" cell phone market.

He said consumers' appetite for phones that include things like digital music players, cameras and video recording will drive the need for specialized chips.

So far, concerns about a single-chip architecture have not weighed too heavily on the shares of chip makers providing components to cell phone makers.

AP

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The four-hour lecture includes how to solve the owner's problem; the overall strategies; keys to success; how to find distressed properties/sellers; how to make your offer; important provisions for your protection; negotiating strategies with owner and lender; common mistakes that should be avoided; valuing properties by mini appraisal; many tips on inspecting properties, financing, rehabilitating the property, selling the property, documentation and registration, taxation; and other important topics.

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Other seminars by the Urban Institute are: March 12—How to Start and Manage A Successful Real Estate Brokerage Company; March 14—Legal Aspect of Sale, Mortgage and Lease with Contract Documentation and Registration; March 16—Property Development Principles and Updates on HLURB Rules.

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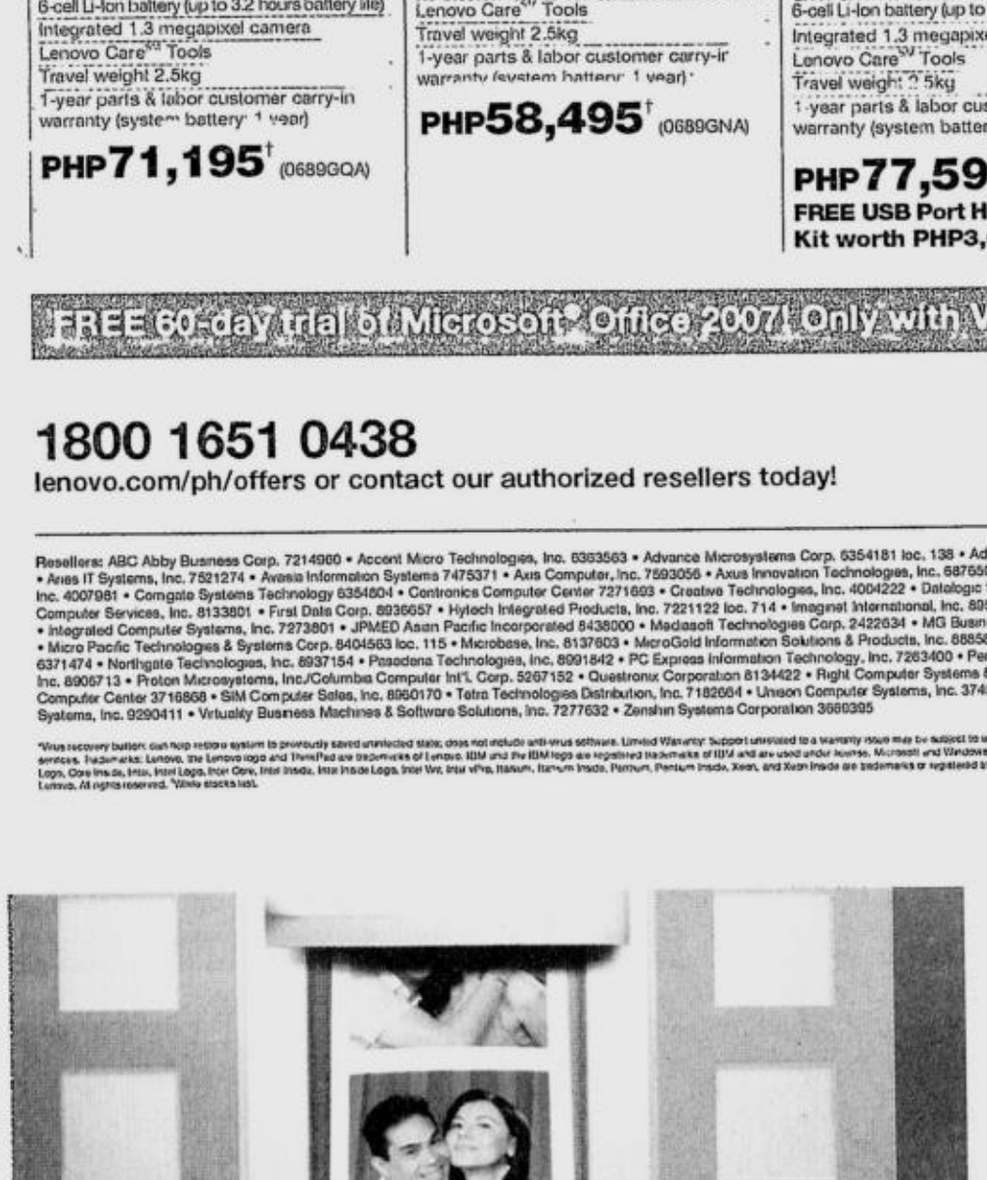

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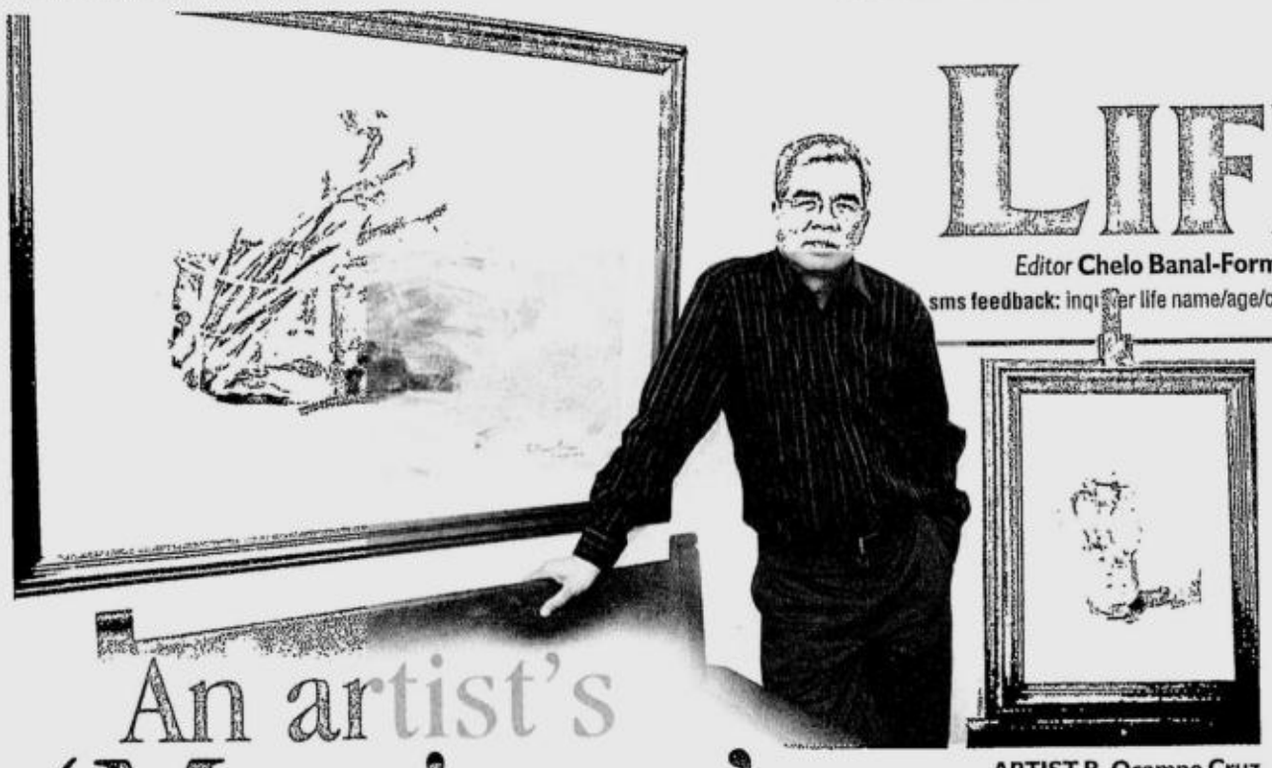


ARTIST R. Ocampo Cruz

An artist's 'Musings'

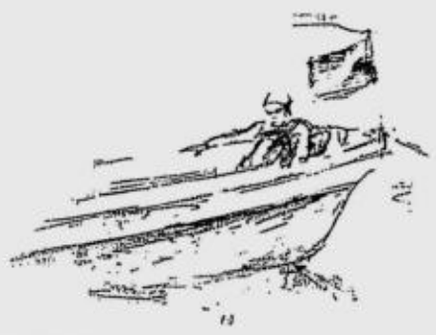
By James P. Ong
Contributor

SOME PAINTINGS ARE made to stop you dead on your tracks. The works of R. Ocampo Cruz don't have this appeal. You walk by and see them in your peripheral vision—and then take a step back and realize that it's something you'd want to take your time looking at. They represent the classic meaning of art: captured beauty.

"I have no pretensions as a painter," says Cruz, who opens his his third solo exhibit, "Musings," this week. "What you see is what you get. I paint with a passion and you can see it in my strokes."

If there's anyone who knows about passion, it's Cruz.

Cruz majored in painting at the College of Architecture and Fine Arts of University of Santo Tomas, where he studied under the likes of Bonifacio Cristobal, Wenceslao Garcia, Angelito Antonio, Mario Parial and Leonadro Hidalgo.



"AT LAST"

"AT THREE in the Afternoon"

At UST he was painting editor of Vision, the student organ of his college. But he never went full-time as an artist. Instead, he ventured into sales and marketing communications.

Today, he runs a marketing and public-relations firm that also serves as publisher of Muse, a quarterly art magazine backed by top companies who are big into social corporate responsibility.

Cruz likes to boast that he is one of those rare businessmen who are also artists.

But he never abandoned art. "I try to paint when I have the time. When the conditions are conducive. Mornings are usually the best time," he muses.

In "Musings," he finally fulfills his dream of showing his nude charcoal drawings with his acrylic paintings. There are also works in watercolor and ink.

The collection was done in a span of 18 years in different places done at a leisurely pace.

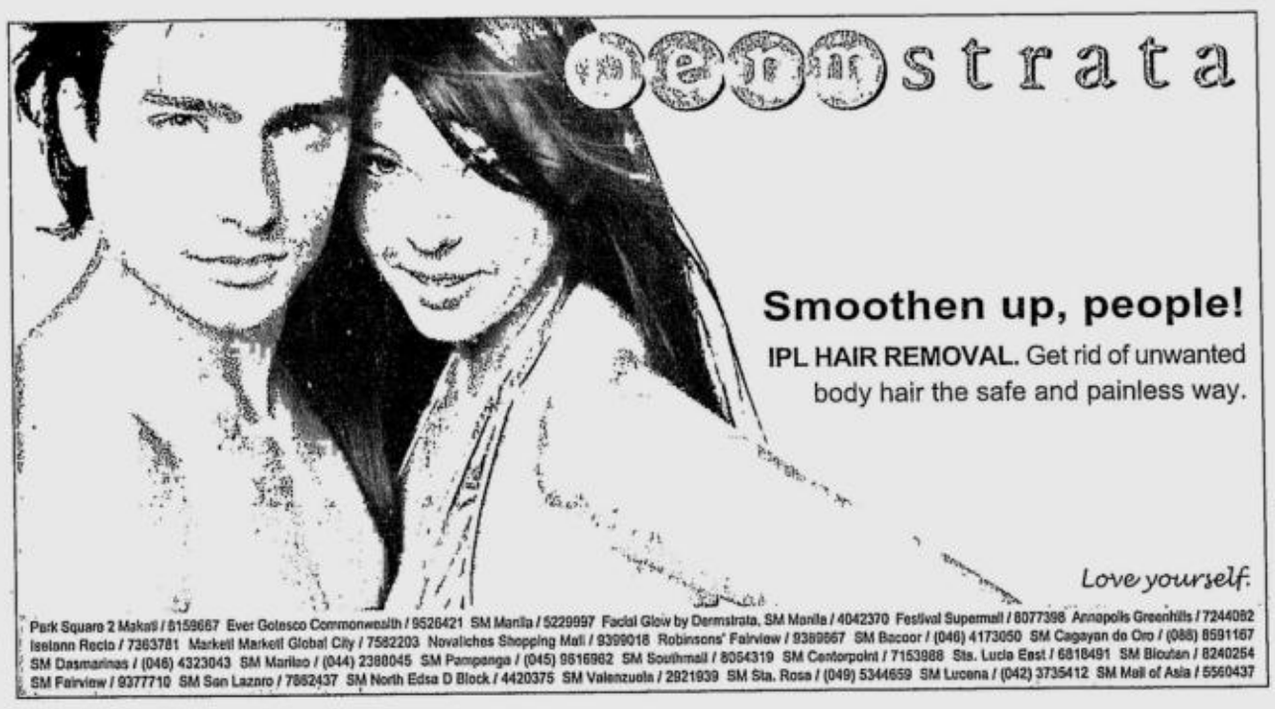
"While on a beach in Malibu, California, and Puerto Galera in Mindoro. The nudes were done in the UST College of Fine Arts atelier and a Legaspi Village studio. The acrylic on canvas paintings were done in my atelier," he says.

"Musings" was organized while Cruz was in the thick of producing the second issue of Muse magazine, which he says will always be close to his heart.

"My vision is to reach every Filipino wherever they are in all parts of the world," he says. "For a start the National Commission for Culture and the Arts buys copies for distribution to consular offices abroad. Several real - estate companies have also pledged advertising support and distribute the Muse in all their road shows abroad," he says.

"MY DILEMMA"

"Musings," an exhibit by Ramoncito Ocampo Cruz, opens on March 16 at 1/of Gallery, 2/L, Serendra Piazza, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig. Call 9013152.



Philippine Embassy in Seoul hosts Moscoso exhibit

PAINTER Edsel Moscoso shows off his work to guests.

MOSCOSO; Philippine ambassador to South Korea Susan O. Castrence; Keum-jin Yoon, director of the Korea Foundation Cultural Center; and attaché Gregg Angeles

IN CELEBRATION OF THE NATIONAL ARTS Month last February, Philippine Ambassador Susan O. Castrence led the opening of the painting exhibition "Lahi-Ethnicity" showcasing artworks by acclaimed Filipino artist Edsel Moscoso.

The opening was followed by a reception hosted by the embassy at the Korea Foundation Cultural Center on Feb. 23. It was attended by members of the diplomatic corps, Filipino community and Korean art enthusiasts.

The exhibition, hosted by the embassy with the support of Korea Foundation, brings to Seoul 24 works by Moscoso portraying rural life in his home province of Antique inspired by his lifetime of watching rural folks including farmers, fisherfolk, market vendors and children.

In her remarks during the opening ceremony, Ambassador Castrence expressed her hope that the Korean public and the diplomatic community would appreciate the genius that Moscoso has in him which is dedicated to the rural talks under the milieu where he grew up.

"Moscoso is one of the most notable contemporary artists in the Philippines and we want him to be known in Korea and the rest of Asia," Castrence said.

An art review in the English daily Korea Herald, described Moscoso's paintings as "simple in its complexity—having no forceful transformations occurring, no epiphanies or social messages. Instead there's the work of an artist experimenting with corn position, juxtaposing figures with everyday rural life. Viewers will be confronted with questions about the flow of life and its paradoxical nature vacillating between the divine and real."

According to Yoon Keum-jin, director of the Korea Foundation Cultural Center: 'The Philippines is very well known to Koreans given the robust people-to-people exchanges but Koreans have not yet been exposed to Filipino contemporary art." By bringing Moscoso's works to Seoul, Ambassador Castrence hopes that Koreans will find an appreciation for the artistic side of Filipinos.

The exhibition will run until March 16 at the Gallery Nuri of the Korea Foundation Center in Seoul.

THE ARTIST

ARGENTINE Ambassador Alfredo A. Alcorta, Ambassador Castrence, Sri Lankan Ambassador J. Asitha I. Perera, Singaporean Ambassador Chua Thai Kong and other guests with the artist

Rocking the landscape

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

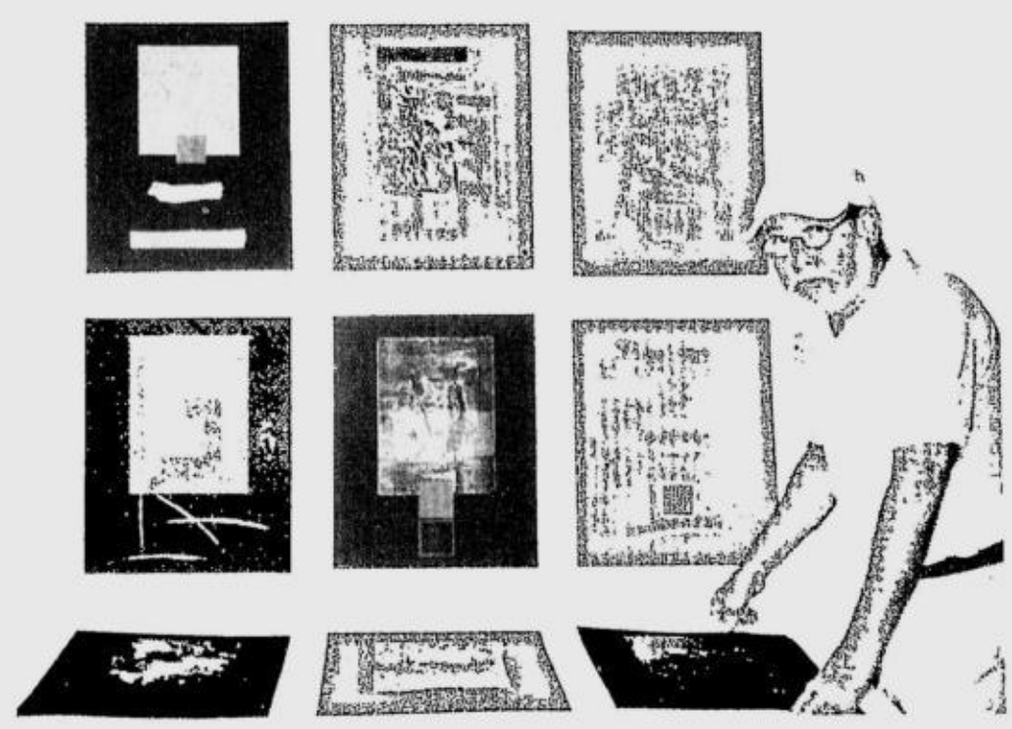
A TWO-DOZEN COLLECTION OF NEW paintings from Raul Isidro brings its share of shocks and surprises.

Regarded as one of the stalwarts of abstract expressionism of the late '60s, Isidro has periodically taken long intervals of rest and activity, his painting chores constantly subjected to mutations of time and space, not to mention the problem of survival. Spaced out to show an aspect of his artistic evolution, his exhibits become a venue for the artist to reflect on the vital issues affecting humanity, from the endangered climate to terrorism.

The artist, after all, has been through countless evolutions, even in the abstract genre to which he has remained devoted. Moreover, his just concluded leadership of the Printmakers Association of the Philippines (PAP) has been instrumental in pushing the group to reassert itself, promoting the medium, and finally regaining its position in the art world. It was, of course, a matter of time before the artist could come up with a suite of abstracted memories, of specific sites he has visited and those that exist in the realm of the imagination.

Simply billed "Landscapes," (North Court, Power Plant Mall, Rockwell, until March 14), the exhibit is a visual pilgrimage that takes the viewer back in time, more than a decade past, and through space, with all the essential qualities conjured by specific places around the globe.

Having lived for 10 years in the United States, basking in glorious California weather, Isidro has a suite of memories from the landscapes forever etched in his memory: the changing hues with the onset of winter, the concomitant emotional states they evoke, the corresponding moods conjured by his trademark brushstrokes, as though perennially charged with dramatic contrasts.



Raul Isidro's strokes and colors conjure emotions and memories

Calligraphy

The so-called suite of "rock" paintings is actually inspired by those periodic jaunts he has taken across the country, visiting cultural sites and conducting print workshops. Their shapes and colors indubitably resemble those of rocks—sharp-edged, richly textured, both cerebral and emotional—but the tapestry has a far grander sweep than what the eye can see.

With his penchant for calligraphy, Isidro is a master in the art of creating tension, which he does with a gentle-fervid sweep of the brush, the massing of hues. Yet, at the end, the image radiates a rare delicacy of feeling unmistakably Isidro's.

A number of the paintings go farther in time, to the artist's birthplace of Calbayog City, which he periodically revisits through his canvases.

Though remote in location, the once sleepy town, the burgeoning capital of Western Samar, Calbayog is blessed with nature's own landscape, its cavernous caves intact and diving sites teeming with underwater bounty. Malajog is one such site, its idyllic soul unchanged even with the onset of global warming, as the artist so warns.

There are more landscapes to behold in this magisterial show of colors, forms, textures—and moods. The best way for the viewer to survey the artist's panoply of landscapes is to take on the 25 paintings one a time—and then collectively, at the end.

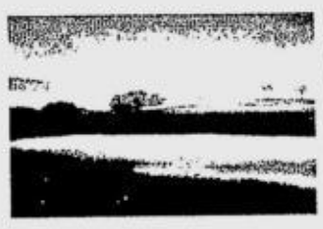
But the viewer is well-admonished to spend some time just relishing the show of colors in these lovely canvases. They look as though they single-handedly can rock the earth and, needless to say, one's old-fashioned view of what constitutes landscapes.

E-mail the author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com

VISUAL ARTS

Obemio at West Gallery

West Gallery (4/L SM Megamall) presents "Fragile," an exhibit by Roel Obemio, March 15-27. Obemio's exhibit captures scenes from his childhood and how these have changed over the years. After his clown series, Obemio now tackles ecological themes. Call 6341284.



Galura at Nine

"New Vistas," an exhibit of recent works by watercolorist Alfred Galura, is on view at Gallery Nine in Megamall and Wee Art Gallery in the SM Mall of Asia. Gala night is on March 14, 6.30 p.m. at Gallery Nine. The collection includes landscapes and flora of Batanes Island. Araceli Limcaoco-Dans and former Rep. Butch Abad are guests of honor. Call 6877302.

Mansueto at Galerie Astra

Galerie Astra (210 LRI Business Plaza, 2/F, Reposo St., Makati) presents Red Mansueto's "Walls of Change" until March 22. Mansueto's art includes different works on hard board and framed works on paper, depicting the many facets of life expressed in vivid colors and symbols. From the sober dark tones, the artist moves on to brighter colors using the same bold strokes and experimental use of different media. The product is a statement of the world he revolves in. Call 8903988, 7269015 and 8120293.

"WALL of Contrasts," by Red Mansueto

"RAPUNZEL 2003," by Arnel Mirasol

Mirasol at Crucible

Arnel Mirasol unveils his new collection of fairy-tale illustrations and paintings in his second solo exhibit at the Crucible Gallery (4/F, SM Megamall A, Mandaluyong), which opens March 13 at 6 p.m. The exhibit features paintings depicting cockers, divers and seductive women done in his trademark sharp focus realist style. The show will run until March 25. Call 6356061.

PAL photo exhibit

The Corporate Communications Department of Philippine Airlines presents "PAL at 66," the opening of the First Philippine Airlines Photo Exhibit on March 12, at 4/L, Bridgeway, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong. The exhibit will run until March 18.

Art exhibit for a cause

Pan Pacific Manila's Pacific Lounge is the venue of "The Hands That Feed: Art Exhibit for a Cause," March 12-14. The exhibit is organized by Tintero Art and Design (Tintero), a multidisciplinary graphic design studio, and is open to the public from 6-10 p.m. Call 5360788.

"UNTITLED," by Renato Barja

"BUDDHA," by Jesus Genotiva

Barja, Morada and Genotiva at Nineveh

Nineveh Artspace at Villa Silgan, Sta. Cruz, Laguna presents three exhibits: "Children Factory" by Renato Barja; "Recuerdo" by Jerry Morada; and "Alabok" by Jesus Genotiva. Call (049) 8086617 or 0916-7720368.

Lecture by Ambeth Ocampo

Ayala Museum presents a talk on "Tsinoy: Mestizo Art in Colonial Times" by Ambeth Ocampo, on March 17, 2 p.m. The discussion is in line with the museum's ongoing exhibit which offers an insight into the works of 19th-century Tsinoy artisans. It runs until May 27. Call 7577117 to 21 local 14. Visit www.ayalamuseum.com.

Sanso in 'Zero-in'

Zero-in, the consortium of the country's premier private museums, celebrates its fifth year with "Zero-in 5: Convergence." The consortium features a series of exhibits at the Ateneo Art Gallery, Ayala Museum, Lopez Memorial Museum, Museo Pambata and Bahay Tsinoy. The Ayala Museum presents "Black Bouquet: Juvenal Sanso," which focuses on an intensely creative period in the early years of Sanso's artistic career from 1955-1968 when the Paris-based artist produced an abundance of etchings and lithographs. It brings together over 60 pieces from the collections of the artist, Ateneo, andLopez. The works showcase Sanso's "fine hand for linear detail," showing gnarled trees, lush vegetation and stark landscapes—now icons in Philippine modern printmaking. The exhibit runs until March 11. Call 7577117 to 21.

'Nudes' by Arte Pintura

THE ARTE PINTURA, HEADED by Addie Sycip Cukingnan, presents "Nudes," March 17, 6 p.m., at the Arte Pintura Gallery at 2/F, Kitaro Bldg., Shaw Blvd. and Wack-Wack Rd.

"Nudes" is a compilation of works produced by members Rey Ademis, Rey Aurelio, Flor Baradi, Nena Frondoso, Jessie Martin, Abelardo Pasigado, Azor Pazcoguin, Debbie Ann Tan, Shirley Tan, Toni Yusi, together with their students and friends, including respected artist Edgar Doctor in a series of painting sessions with nude models at their Saturday painting workshop.

Done in their own distinct styles, the exhibit showcases nudes in oil, watercolor, pastel and charcoal.

The Arte Pintura Painting Workshop is held every Saturday and is open to new and advanced students interested in learning how to paint using oil as medium. Call 7266542.

NUDE painting in oil, by Tony Yusi

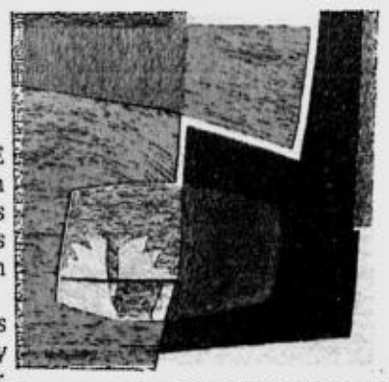
CAINGAT (second from left) with art collector Manuel Duldulao, National Press Club director Jerry Yap, art dealer Manny Florendo and Albert Alcantara of Heritage Art Center (at the back).

Caingat works at Heritage

ART ENTHUSIASTS LED BY THE artist himself, Fil-Aussie Jun Caingat, cut the ribbon for his one-man show of his latest works on Philippine themes brought in from Australia.

The opening of "Kabalen Colors from Down Under," was recently held at the Heritage Art Center, 4/L, Bldg. A, SM Megamall.

The works display Caingat new style of brighter, clearer colors. Caingat paints in a pointillist manner, building up overlaying layers that allow portions of the under painting to show through. He took art lessons from Paul de Prat at the Julian Ashton School of Arts in Sydney, and is the 1977 and 1999 first prize winner of the prestigious Panthers Annual Australian Day Art Competition.



WORKS by Jun Caingat

"BARIL-BARILAN," by Jaypee Samson

"FILLING the Void," by EJ Cabangon

Artists portray touch . . .

From page C4

and the cuteness of the image cannot bridge the few inches of distance between the twain.

There are, of course, a lot of artworks here that vividly realize the theme.

In Carlos Francisco II's "The Wedding," the artist has successfully created a multi-layered image of union by wielding two techniques. Here he portrays an abstracted yet recognizably representational composition of a man and a woman in a full-bodied embrace, and when you look closer you get the bonus of seeing the bodies melting into profiles of faces kissing.

In Mervy Pueblo's "Fertile Breeding Ground" No. I, the artist has created a soft sculpture that fully fulfills the theme, that is, literally and figuratively. It is constructed fabric and metal, the furry cloth of light brown voluptuously knotted on stainless steel suggesting biomorphs copulating.

Now, here is something you can touch, feel the texture, relish the softness—maybe not human but very snuggly and warm.

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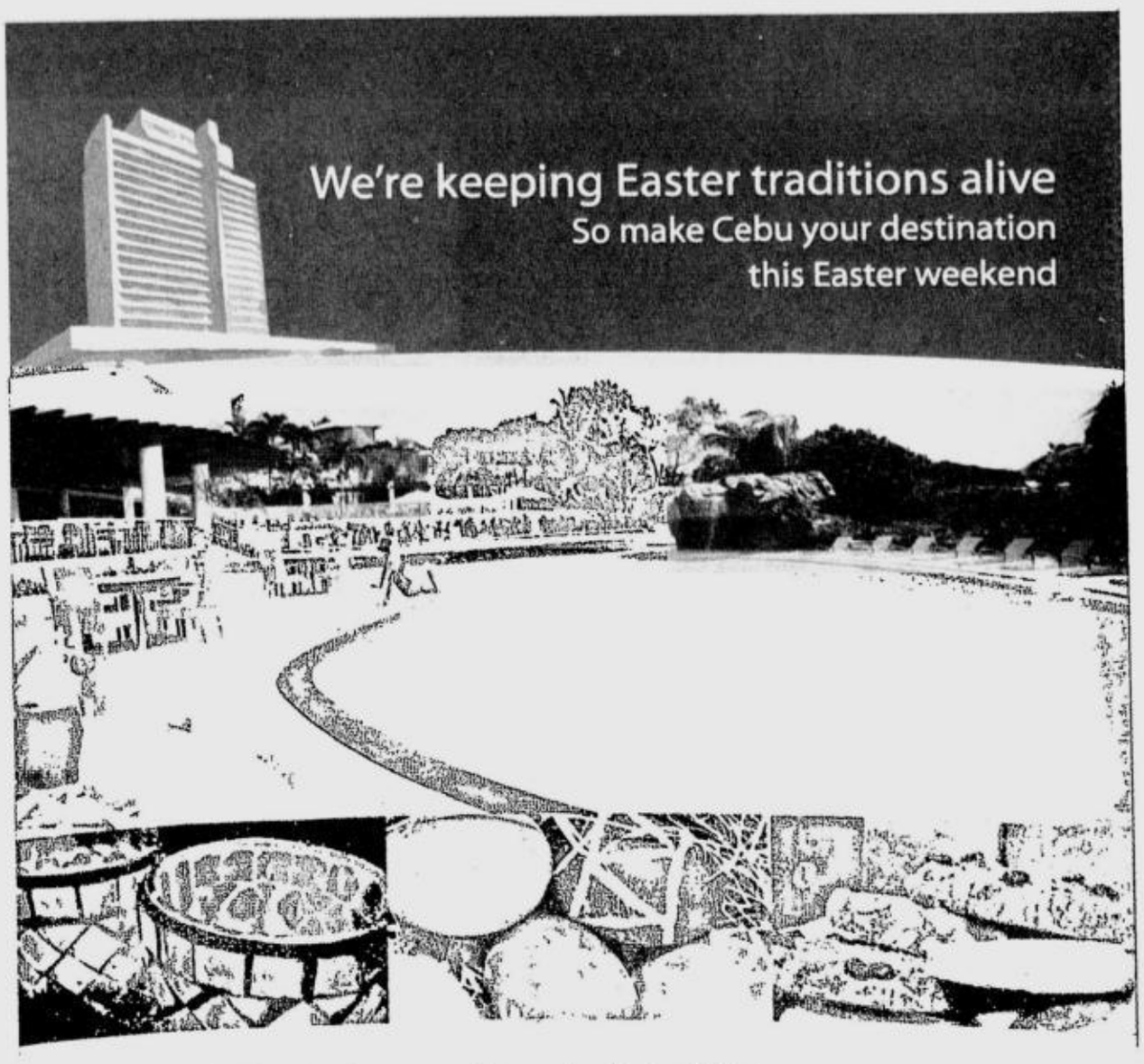

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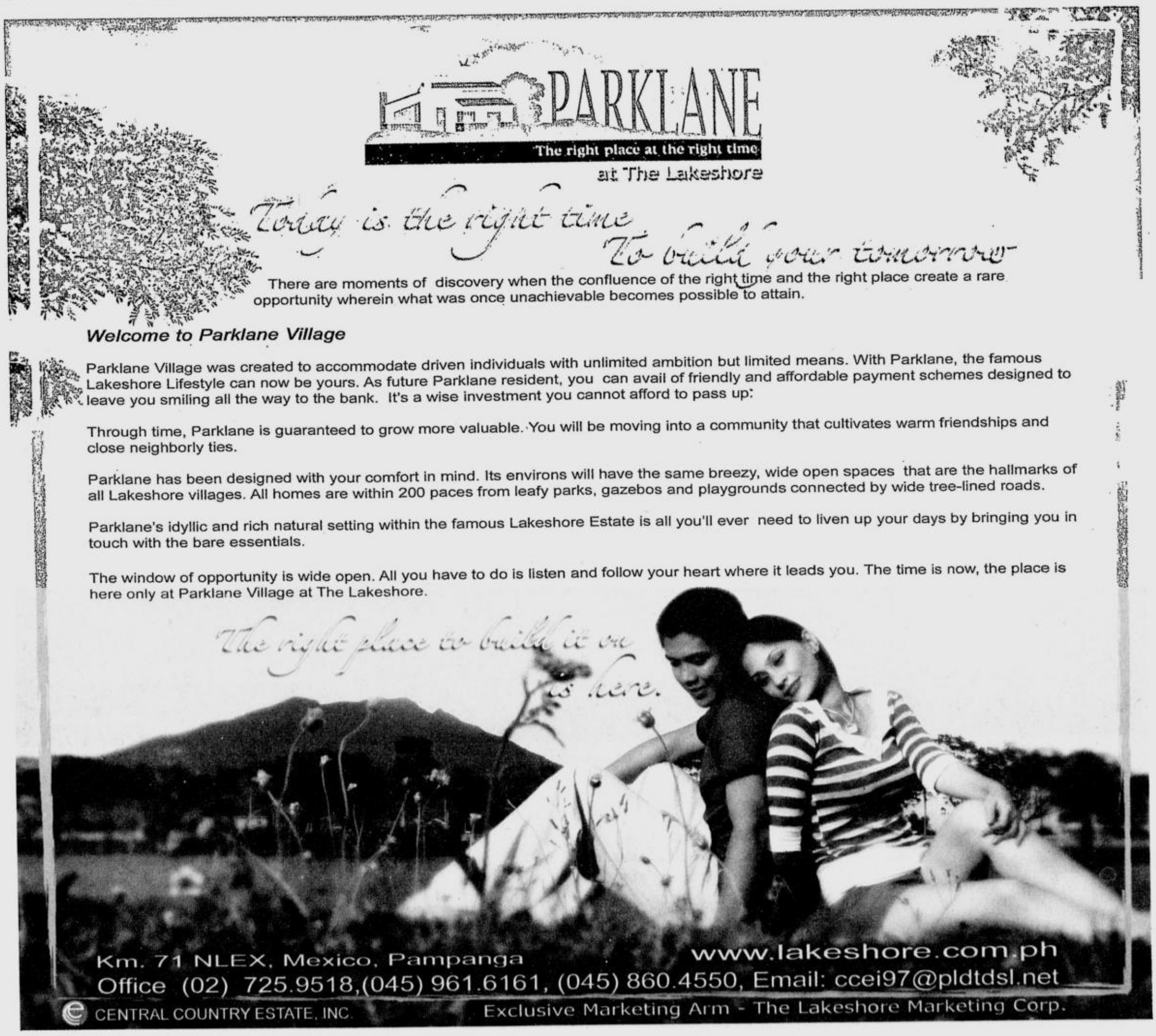


"THE WEDDING," by Carlos Francisco II

Artists portray touch and separation, hostility and embrace

By Constantino C. Tejero

A NEW ART'S VENUE HAS OPENED IN another unlikely location in the metropolis. Surprising for its relative newness, it is showing a group exhibit of powerhouse names, and in large number.

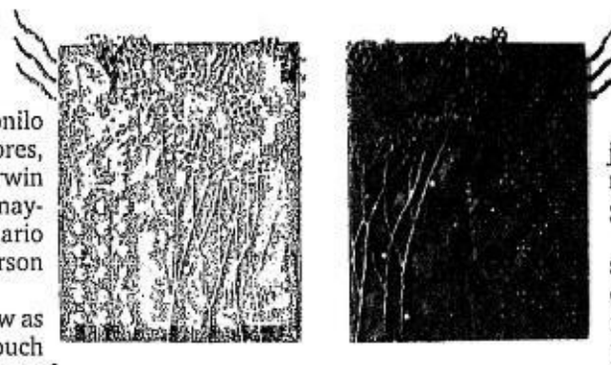
In fact, some 50 noted and upcoming artists are exhibiting their works, ranging from painting to sculpture to print to new media, in the show "Yakap," until March 14 in Kaida Art Gallery, 2/F, GFO Bldg., 122 Kamuning Road, Quezon City.

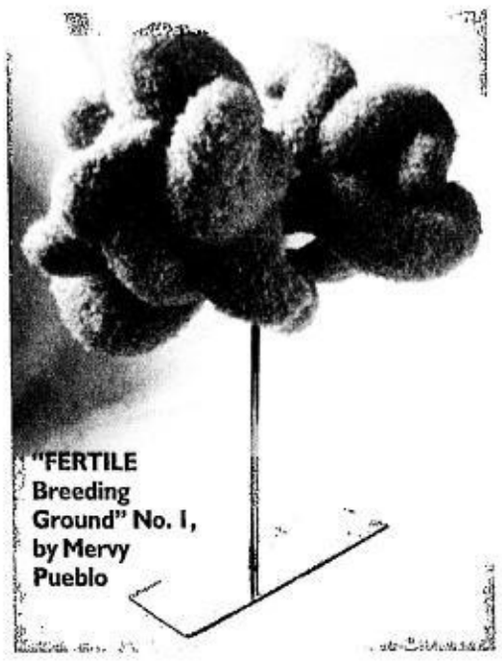
Here are familiar names such as Jeho Bitancor, Ruel Caasi, Benjie Cabangis, EJ Cabangon, Benjie Torrado Cabrera, Michael Cacnio, Daniel Coquilla, Chie Cruz, Melvin Culaba, Don Dalmacio, Ferdinand Doctolero, Leonilo Doloricon, Noell El Farol, Karen Flores, Guerrero Habulan, Winner Jumalon, Erwin Leaño, Norlie Meimban, Ferdie Montemayor, Jim Orencio, Anthony Palomo, Mario Parial, Mikel Parial, Elmer Roslin, Jerson Samson, Olan Ventura.

The exhibition note explains the show as "works that deal with the delicacy of touch and energy, the pleasurable revelations of various conditions and expressions of affection or endearment."

What the note fails to delineate are the nuances of this theme. Because there are some artworks here that don't typically touch on the theme of touch, or embrace, as *yakap* is supposed to mean—but, in fact, suggest its opposite.

Take Renato Ong's "Dreamland," a rococo sculptural relief rendered in copper on fiberglass. This piece is extremely tactile, satisfying the theme of touch, but the piece is bisected and mounted on the wall not as two parts of a diptych but as companion pieces fixed several inches away from each other. The whole then looks like a piece sundered apart.


"DREAMLAND," by Renato Ong


"FERTILE Breeding Ground" No. I, by Mervy Pueblo

"Baril-barilan," Jaypee Samson's realist rendition of two children playing toy guns, is another case. With the boy and the girl standing slightly apart with backs turned to each other while aiming their guns in opposite directions, they are either facing common enemies surrounding them and thus protecting each other, or taking the initial steps in a duel.

What we feel here is not the collective joy of communal play but the tension of commencing violence and the hostility inherent in gender politics and role-playing.

In Cabangon's "Filling the Void," there is spatial as well as emotional distance even in claustrophobia. In this depiction of two dolls' faces as if about to kiss, the coldness of the hyperrealist technique subverts what could have been a human touch. Even the close cropping

ARTISTS/ C3

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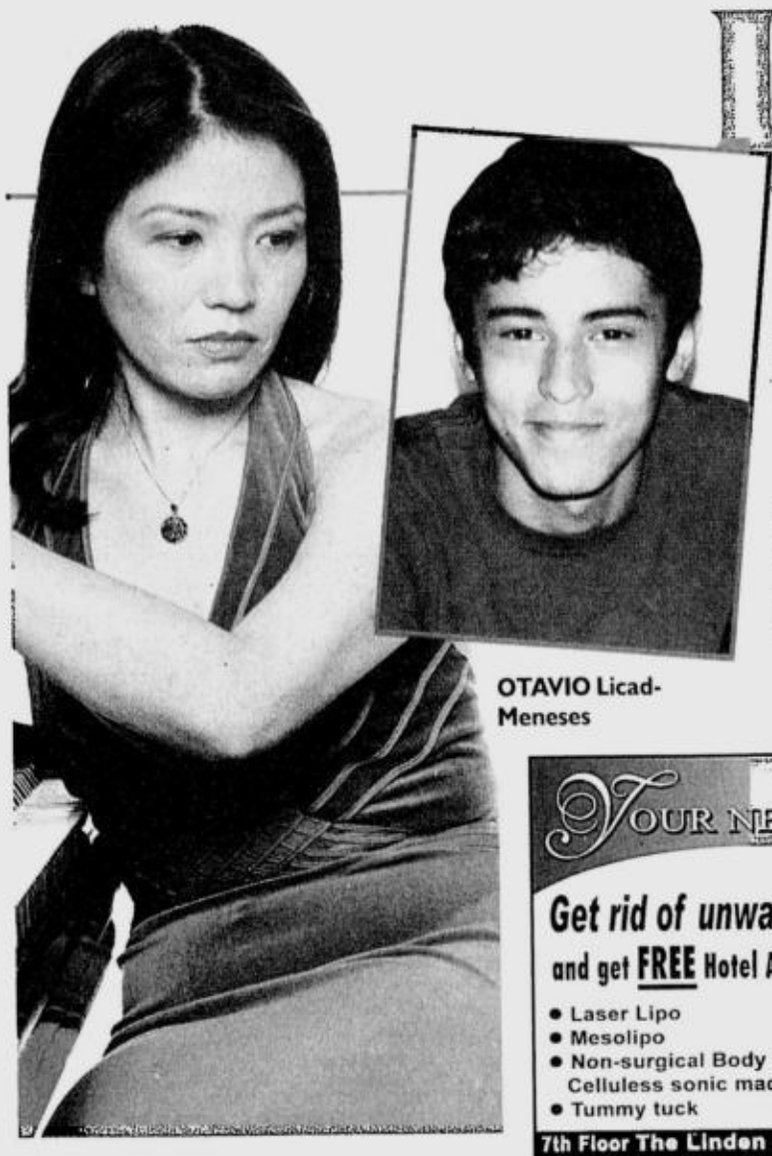
Licad teams up with son in PPO concert

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra music director Eugene Castillo took up with me the possibility of Cecile Licad doing Poulenc's Concerto for Two Pianos with a young artist.

LICAD/ D4



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Inspired reinventions

Five plays show how thoughtful tweaking can reinvigorate stale works and art forms

By Gibbs Cadiz

THE *COMEDIA* gets jazzed up in Entablado's "Sandaang Panaginip," directed by Jerry Respeto.

THE *ZARZUELA*, THE *comedia*, the stage melodrama—or, for that matter, Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero and the theater he represented—they're all dead, passe, *finis*, right?

Wrong. Creative sorcery of the kind that could resurrect dead plays and electrify moribund art forms was on display in Manila's stages in the last few weeks, offering a burst of exciting theater-making before the lull of the summer months.

Ateneo's Entablado reworked the *comedia* in "Sandaang Panaginip," the University of the Philippines Playwrights Theater's "Basilia ng Malolos" reinvented the *zarzuela*, and Guerrero's works enjoyed reconfigurations both sensitive—Gantimpala Theater's "Forever/Call Me Flory"—and rousingly radical—Peta's "Belong Puti."

Guerrero has been dead for 12 years, but for four recent weekends at the Peta Phinma Theater, he was a palpable presence—a bright life force stroked to lush theatrical dimensions in Nonon's Padilla's riff on the life and art of the late National Artist for Theater.

"Belong Puti" itself would hardly be recognizable to Guerrero. Padilla took the dramatist's last play, "The Woman with a White Veil," rewrote it, tacked on an excerpted version of the playwright's first one-act play, "Half an Hour in a Convent" (in a new Spanish translation at that), and wove through them all his own self-reflexive, metaphoric ruminations on identity, illusion, death and decay—the self-immolation that artists must endure to give life to their art.

Such high-minded terms do a poor job of capturing the messy, sprawling, but also visceral and thrillingly ambitious experience that "Belong Puti" proved to be.

Guerrero, Padilla's uncle, would have cackled approvingly at how he was portrayed in this play: perplexed, engaged, luminously alive—devoured by his life's work, yet also above it. A Lear of the intelligentsia, surrounded not by dissident offspring but by a world (represented by his wife Annella and her *amigas*) in thrall to shallow obsessions.

Which other local director has the reach and grasp, the Herzog-like adventurousness of Padilla? And which local actor could match his vision other than Mario O'Hara?

O'Hara's muscular, intellectually adroit performance is the finest we've seen in this admittedly young year, and he had exceptional company with him: CB Garrucho (with her to-die-for soliloquy), Sherry Lara, Lou Veloso—in fact, everyone in this triumphant production.

Padilla was on hibernation from theater for some years before "Belong Puti." This sly, sophisticated reflection on subtance over surface, as seen through Guerrero's perspicacious art and art-making, was every inch a worthy comeback.

Modest aims

Tony Espejo, artistic director of Gantimpala Theater, had more modest aims for his twinbill production of Guerrero's "Forever" and "Call Me Flory." He wanted to introduce the National Artist's works to students who had become Gantimpala's natural constituency via its regular staging of "Ibong Adarna," "Florante at Laura," "Noli Me Tangere" and "El Filibusterismo."

It was a breath of fresh air to see Espejo tackle two one-act plays of more recent provenance and bring a quiet, current touch to both.

"Forever," set in the 1950s, and "Call Me Flory," in the 1970s, are plays in danger of betraying their dated origins without any contemporary sensibility informing their staging in the present. Espejo's restrained direction ensured that they came out brisk and fresh.

In "Forever," for instance, about a married man (Roeder Camañag) attempting to rejoin the wife and son he had abandoned 10 years ago, the family reunion reeked of pure Pinoy movie melodrama.

Here, however, the scene achieved disquiet more from its silences and pauses than from any expressive emotionalism. The wounded pride of a single mother (Monica Llamas) living in a less forgiving time was heartfelt, a cause for illuminating sympathy.

CB GARRUCHO and Mario O'Hara in Nonon Padilla's "Belong Puti" for Peta

ROEDER Camañag, Vincent Kuipers and Monica Llamas in Gantimpala Theater's "Forever," staged by Tony Espejo

Like "Half an Hour in a Convent," "Forever" attested to Guerrero's humanism, his belief in the extraordinary ordinariness of his characters. But he could swing hard, too, against cant and hypocrisy, as in "Call Me Flory," which skewered the antics of old rich and nouveau riche alike in '70s Manila.

The play's retro setting and *dramatis personae*—an atelier where a couturier is brokering a meeting between a long-time society pillar and a newly wealthy interloper—demanded updating, which J. Dennis Teodosio provided.

He added scenes and characters to heighten the satire, capped by this unhinged exchange between the ladies: "I don't dine with the maids," sniffed the *doña* (Llamas again). "My maids don't dine!," retorted her rival (Wilma Doesnt).

"Belong Puti" and "Forever/Call Me Flory" constituted a virtual Guerrero mini-festival. In both cases, adaptation—to quote Ben Brantley of the New York Times—"is not mimicry; it's rejuvenation."

Spry staging

Rejuvenation also came to mind with Entablado's spry staging of Rene Villanueva's "Sandaang Panaginip," directed by Jerry Respeto, to mark the Ateneo theater group's 25th year.

Villanueva's play was written nearly 30 years ago, but you wouldn't know it from the enjoyably impish manner by which the Entablado ensemble performed it using traditional *comedia* tropes bent out of shape.

This was no longer the usual tiff between Christians and Muslims. The story—about a kingdom gone to waste through the machinations of a queen and her two daughters—had become a commentary on the misuse of power. In places, it even antedated "Ever After," the movie starring Drew Barrymore that itself recast the Cinderella legend.

In Respeto's staging, the *comedia*'s trademark martial music and stylized choreography were kept intact, but much of the rest were dragged to the 21st century: The credits appeared on a side screen, and part of the tale unfolded as *komiks*-style visuals.

The gapless interplay of video and live action, all done while the play was being staged al fresco (at Ateneo's Cervini Field, to simulate the way it was done in the *comedia*'s heyday), conjured an enchanted atmosphere.

The cheeky tone carried over to the actors, who were delightfully in on the bold deconstruction.

The clearest signal that this play wasn't about to traffic in type was K Calubaquib, who played the nasty Reyna Leona as an astute, amoral woman. Her character would get her comeuppance in the end, but not before her moment of glory: a musical peroration on the balcony, arms waving à la Evita Peron.

Make that Imelda Marcos—because this conniving Reyna Leona was dressed in terno all throughout.

A *comedia* as droll, artful and attuned to pop culture as "Sandaang Panaginip" deserves to be seen in more open fields around the country.

Sweep and breadth

If "Sandaang Panaginip" retooled the *comedia*, the UP Playwrights Theater's "Basilia ng Malolos," with libretto by Nicanor Tiongson, music by Joy Marfil and direction by José Estrella, set its sights on overhauling another venerable art form: the *zarzuela*.

"Basilia," a musical adaptation of the life of Basilia Tantoco who, in the 1880s, led an unprecedented campaign by some 20 young Bulakeñas to open a night school for girls in their area, represented top-drawer research by Tiongson.

His libretto offered sweep and breadth—a forceful clarity in presenting Basilia as a woman ahead of her time. The overt undermining of *zarzuela* conventions—the lack of a romantic high, the feistiness and verbal acuity of the women, the undisguised feminist spirit of the entire enterprise—bore scrutiny because of the pleasures and pitfalls it offered.

The play could have easily dissolved into a talky puddle, but Estrella's direction assured continuous movement onstage, the costumes (by John Abul) and choreography (by Dexter Santos) intensely engaged the eye, and the actors, led by the lovely trio of Jenny Jamora (as Basilia), Nathasia Garrucha and Nikki Ventosa—with the sharp Diana Alferez as comic foil—were up to the task of summoning, with some adjustments, the feel of a vanished era.

Having said these, the drawn-out, piecemeal unfolding of history leached out some of the vigor and snap that by right should have accrued to this epic *zarzuela*. A "Basilia" tighter than its two hours and 45 minutes' running time would not have felt, at least in parts, an imposition.

Also, if its subversive streak extended to the music, then "Basilia" succeeded only too well. Marfil's melodies were the least distinguished element of this production—a pity, because its actors could sing, especially Garrucha with her cultured pipes.

There were inspired moments, like the "Alerta Katipunan" seamlessly morphing into "Battle Hymn of the Republic" to signal the American invasion. But in the droning pitter-patter that came before and after such junctures, "Basilia's" music, unlike its heroine, failed to impress.

E-mail the author at gcadiz@inquirer.com.ph, visit www.gibbscadiz.com

THE WOMEN of UP Playwrights Theater's "Basilia ng Malolos," directed by José Estrella with libretto by Nicanor Tiongson

Adapting a theater chestnut for a new generation

Relocating 'Gay Birds' to a '70s Manila setting was more daunting than I thought

By Joel Rufino A. Nuñez
Contributor

WHEN ROBBIE D. Guevara told me Repertory Philippines had given him his first directorial project, I was happy for him. Robbie has been with Rep since the 1980s and has grown tremendously as an actor over the 20 odd years that I have known him.

He has gone on to join the Scotland and Hong Kong casts of "Miss Saigon" and has shared his talents and know-how as an acting coach to several generations of Rep workshoppers.

When Robbie told me the play he was doing was "Gay Birds," I thought it was a fitting choice for him, since he had played the lead when Rep produced it in 1994. When he told me Rep would do the play as a Filipino adaptation, I asked who was doing the adaptation. Robbie said: "You wanna do it?"

Of course, I wanted to! I did Rep musicals for 10 years, from 1981 to 1991, and have been hankering to do theater again for the longest time. Adult preoccupations—such as a full-time career as a lawyer—have limited my theater sorties to watching plays and musicals.

I've always been fond of writing, having been involved in some TV shows of late, and my proudest moment as a writer was when I was commissioned to write a movie script, which was produced and shown: the very scary (*ahem*) "White Lady."

ARNEL Carrion, Jejie Esguerra and Dingdong Rosales in Repertory Philippines' "Gay Birds"

Challenge

To adapt "Gay Birds" to a Philippine setting was quite a challenge. Its original source material, "La Cage aux Folles" by Jean Poiret, was written in the early '70s and made into a film in 1978. The play was designed as a farce with the comedy broad and physical, and Robbie's vision was altogether different.

First, we had to make sure that the flavor of the play becomes distinctly "Pinoy," including the type of humor. I suggested to Robbie that the adaptation be set in the period encompassing 1978-1981 because I felt this was a period I was familiar with as I came to Manila for my college education in 1978. Second, this was the time when disco was at its peak and Manila was at its most decadent.

Certainly there were conscious references to Coco Banana, the legendary discotheque that was more than just that, but we didn't want Bird Cage to be Coco Banana. Disco music in this period—both Pinoy and foreign—was also at its most glorious, as were the dance crazes that we all danced to.

Lastly, I wanted to show not only one aspect of social Manila—social in the sense of who's who or what's what, but also, what the Marcos administration did and who it did it to. A rather ambitious take that is best left to other works, but still an element worth including in this adaptation.

Robbie wanted to cast Arnel Ignacio for the role of Albert/Celia/Eleanor, the "mother" of "Gay Birds." Arnel signified his availability for the play, until show-biz commitments overtook his schedule, and Robbie reluctantly had to let him go.

However, his would-be alternate, Oliver Usison, who works for Rep full-time and has come out in Rep plays and musicals for almost 10 years, has proven himself worthy of the role.

If Arnel had made it to the cast, he would have joined the reunion of Rep actors who were in the 1998 cast of "La Cage aux Folles," the Tony award-winning Broadway musical: Mio Infante, who was Cagelle, is doing the set; Deana Aquino was Madame Dindon and is now the "Gay Birds" stage manager and choreographer; and I was also in the company of "La Cage."

Insights

We were lucky in that Robbie had kept his copy of the English translation of "Gay Birds" done by Marijke Amador. Reading through it made me realize that the work of adapting it was more daunting than I had thought.

Friends like Dodo Lim and Bernardo Bernardo (thank God for e-mail!) provided insights on '70s swardspeak, fashions and fads, and gay culture. Rehearsals further honed the adaptation, as Robbie and the actors contributed laugh lines, helped clarify motivations of characters and smoothed out the material's rough edges.

Through it all, Robbie wanted to emphasize the play's main themes of love and family.

On the surface, the thesis of the late Jean Poiret is disturbing and cynical. After all, the character of Albert/Celia/Eleanor says in jest: "Give them time and all straight men become queens."

But if the viewer were to see through the obvious humor of this play and instead highlight the sacrifices and compromises of the main characters, George and Albert, he would see their deep and abiding love for their son, christened Emil in this adaptation.

This is also clear from both the musical and "The Birdcage," the American movie adaptation of "La Cage aux Folles."

I hope this play draws more than laughter from the audience. So sit back, relax and enjoy your evening with the "Gay Birds."

"Gay Birds" stars Arnel Carrion, Oliver Usison, Jejie Esguerra, Topper Fabregas, Tony Amador, Dingdong Rosales, Jejie Esguerra, Hans Eckstein, Micah Muñoz, Carlos Canlas, Boyd Tinio, Cathy Azanza, Charlie Barredo and Naths Everett.

"Gay Birds" opens March 16, 17 and 18 at Onstage, 2/F, Greenbelt One, Paseo de Roxas, Makati. Visit the Rep office at C2-A Bldg. C, Karrivin Plaza, 2316 Pasong Tamo Extension, Makati. Call 8870710 or 8919999.

Gantimpala workshops

GANTIMPALA THEATER announces the opening of its 2007 Summer Musical Theater Workshop for Teens and Young Adults.

The 2007 Summer Musical Theater Workshop is open to young men and women ages 13 and above. Classes are on April 11-May 19, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at the rehearsal hall of the Concert at the Park Open Air Auditorium, in the heart of historic Luneta, Manila.

The workshop offers lectures and actual exercises on acting, singing and dancing in preparation for a musical theater performance. There are only 35 workshop slots and a musical revue will be mounted by the participants as a culminating activity.

Two-time Aliw Awards nominee Roeder Camanag is facilitator, with tenor and grand *kundiman* champion Nazer Salcedo as voice teacher. Gantimpala artistic director is Tony S. Espejo.

Registration and enrollment starts March 19 at Gantimpala Theater Office, 2/F Open Air Auditorium Building, Luneta, Manila. Bring a 2x2 ID picture. Tuition is P5,000 (inclusive of recital fee), which can be paid cash or on installment.

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Ballet Manila's 'Romeo and Juliet' is mesmerizing

By Elka Krystle R. Requinta
Contributor

TYBALT raises a toast to Paris and Juliet. Looking on are proud parents Lord and Lady Capulet.

IN BALLET, YOU EIther grab or mesmerize your audience. As a result, you get screams and thunderous applause for the former, or exalted applause for the latter.

Ballet Manila (BM) chose to mesmerize ballet enthusiasts of all ages in an almost-full Star Theater with Sergei Vikulov's "Romeo and Juliet."

It took some time for the audience to give the ballet a dignified ovation. It seems it just dawned on them that the ballet was regretfully over.

Shakespeare's tale of star-crossed lovers caught between their feuding families was given classic interpretation by BM artistic director and principal dancer, Lisa Macuja-Elizalde and soloist Rudy de Dios. The two danced harmoniously to Sergey Prokifiev's composition.

Macuja-Elizalde was riveting and fit as ever as Juliet. It was quite difficult to take one's eyes off her when she dances. Even the merest flutter around the stage as she entered elicited warm applause from the audience.

At 42, slight-framed Macuja-Elizalde was still able to play a convincing love-struck teenager: her signature pirouettes was effortless, her movements light.

And having essayed the role countless times, the "prima ballerina of the people" ably conveyed a paradox of feelings that her heroine had to go through in all three acts.

Recently promoted soloist Rudy de Dios, meanwhile, is dashing as Romeo. Tall, dark and handsome in tights, the expressive danseur was able to mold the character into his own persona and diligently did what every good partner should do: Show off his ballerina.

There was still room, though, to make his presence more felt and to stand his ground with (or against) Macuja-Elizalde.

(Lemuel Capa and Mylene Aggabao alternated as Romeo and Juliet, respectively.)

Ravishing

Equally ravishing were the minor characters and the corps de ballet. Very soon, people will be tumultuously applauding for them as lead ballerinas and danseurs, too.

Soloist Niño Guevarra reeked of menace as Tybalt. Dressed in a red and black number (with cape!), slick, brushed-up hair, his arrogant swagger and wide, hyperbolic movements effectively established him as the thorn on Romeo's side.

By contrast, Gerardo Francisco's Mercutio was a delight. Playful and naughty, he made even intricate combination of sautés look easy as he tried to constantly anger Tybalt. Even his death scene was hilarious.

Senior soloist Jerome Espejo's slightly sedated Benevolio and Eileen Lopez's Nurse provided comic relief to an otherwise intense and sugary-sweet romance as they flirted with each other and cavorted across the stage.

Gabriella Galvez's Lady Capulet was a gazelle in burgundy. Gifted with big Bambi eyes, long limbs and a naturally high arch, this young lady in a dark red gossamer gown held herself with confidence and gracefulness as Juliet's elegant mother. Her fine lines and extensions of infinite length were awe-inspiring.

The corps' flawless executions were received appreciatively by the audience. Their impressive appearances equaled those of the main dancers' and forced the audience to remain glued to the stage.

"Elemental"

Another bigwig in Philippine ballet once described the choreography in BM's "Romeo and Juliet" as "elemental," and something not really expected of Vikulov who has once been part of the internationally acclaimed (or feared) Kirov Ballet in Russia.

This time, restaged by principal dancer and ballet master Osias Barroso, BM's play-it-safe and classical rendition is nevertheless effective in giving the raw feel of a timeless love story.

Barroso, who is still recovering from a spine operation, is the original Romeo of BM's version when it premiered both in the CCP Main Theater and Star Theater in 2001.

Jiving with the minimalist feel were the avante-garde backdrops and set design adapted by assistant ballet master Jonathan Jamolo from the original designs done by media-industry tycoon and artist Fred Elizalde.

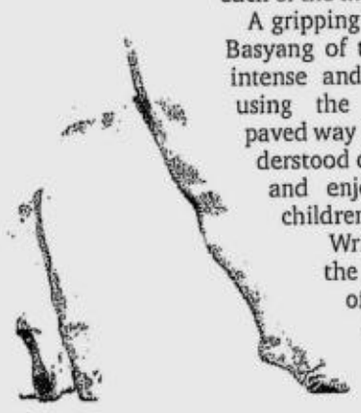
Some of the sets could actually pass for artwork and would not be lost in a sculpture exhibit, such as the huge, red irregularly-shaped window in the balcony scene.

Additional treat

As an added treat for the company's 12th season, actress and environmental advocate Chin Chin Gutierrez appeared as the very regal narrator at the start of each of the three acts.

A gripping (and alluring) Lola Basyang of the production, her intense and dramatic delivery using the Filipino language paved way for a more easily understood dance interpretation and enjoyed especially by children in the audience.

Written by Roy Alvarez, the Filipino translation of Gutierrez's narration is part of BM's campaign to bring ballet closer to the people.



JULIET (Lisa Macuja-Elizalde) and Romeo (Rudy de Dios) locked in a passionate embrace

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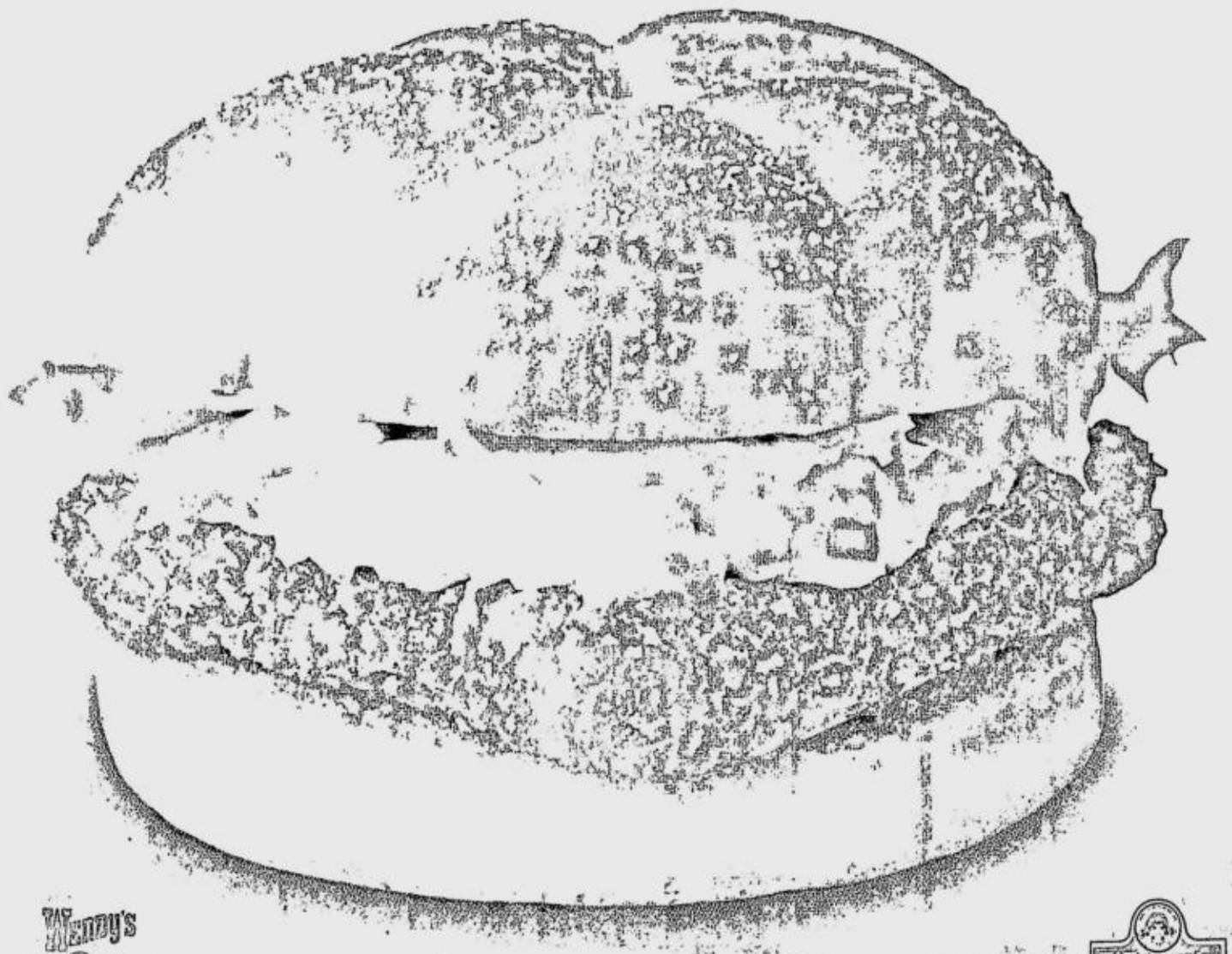

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Licad teams up with son in PPO concert

From page D1

VIOLINIST Alexandru Tomescu and pianist Mary Anne Espina

Who is the young artist, I asked the conductor.

Who would you recommend, he also asked.

When I brought it up with Cecile Licad, she asked, "Why not with my son, Otavio?"

On that note, the mother-and-son music team was born, and you will hear them this coming Friday, March 16, at the CCP Main Theater.

What do I think of the mother-and-son team-up?

The first thing that comes to mind with Otavio as soloist is the "Fiddler on the Roof" song "Sunrise, Sunset," specifically the line that goes: "Was this the little boy I carried?"

As a Licad fan blurted out, "You mean Licad already has a son old enough to be an orchestra soloist?"

Otavio Licad Meneses was born 20 years ago in Manhattan while a coup d'etat was in progress in Manila. He was actually named after a character in the Mozart opera, "Don Giovanni."

CECILE Licad with son Otavio

The day after she gave birth, Licad checked out of the hospital and started touching the piano. A few days later, she was off to Japan to fulfill an engagement. If she had her way, she would have flown to Tokyo with the 2-week-old Otavio, but her mother, Rosario Licad, admonished her the baby was too young to travel.

Every day in Japan, while rehearsing and performing, Licad was burning the Tokyo-New York wires monitoring her 2-week old baby.

A few years later, I remember Licad rehearsing her Brahms and Tchaikovsky concertos at the CCP with stroller and feeding bottles in tow.

Otavio's first instrument was a baby cello (his father was Brazilian cellist Antonio Meneses), but after years of watching his mom play the piano, the piano fever rubbed off on him. His first teacher was the Bicolano-based piano teacher José "Toti" Alvarez, who updated me on Otavio's progress as a recitalist.

But Otavio's talent was not just in music. He was also a good actor and he figured in several school musicals in his elementary and high-school years. One source of our post-concert entertainment was Otavio mimicking Manila's high-society figures complete with exact mannerism of the personalities.

In one of those outreach concerts in Manila, I gave Otavio his Antipolo City debut when I asked him to turn the key behind soprano Lorna Llames' gown while she was singing a "Fledermaus" aria in the residence of physician Joven Cuanang.

His *lola* Rosario would admonish him, "You better act well in this stage appearance because the great Filipino director Ishmael Bernal is in the audience. He might get you as a child actor."

Many years later, Cecile would confide to me, "Pablo, I have to rehearse eight hours a day to get the sound I like. But with Otavio, he gets the right sound with just a few token practice. Maybe he is the better pianist."

Well, music lovers will decide when mother and son figure as soloists in the Poulenc Concerto for Two Pianos with the Philippine Philharmonic on March 16, 8 p.m., under the baton of Castillo.

First part of the program is Licad as soloist in Ravel's Concerto in G Major while the PPO plays Adam's "Short Ride in a Fast Machine" and Faure's "Pelleas et Malisand" Suite, Op. 80.

Call 9007023 or 09065104270 for tickets.

Tomescu a hit

The recent return engagements of Romanian violinist Alexandru Tomescu with pianist Mary Anne Espina broke records for standing ovations. He got three at the Philamlife Theater and two in Palayan City in Nueva Ecija. In Bacolod City, mesmerized Negrenses headed by singer-composer José Mari Chan gave him four standing ovations at the Provincial Capitol Social Hall.

In Nueva Ecija, we learned that Gov. Tomas N. Joson III studied violin as a young boy and was, in fact, playing on a Strad. We were amazed no end that Nueva Ecija has a convention center with a theater capacity of 2,000 and the governor filled it up in the Tomescu recital.

The Bacolod debut of Tomescu was also one of the unforgettable highlights of the National Arts Fair. The gallery owners in the audience headed by Tala Isla Contreras said the concert made her fall in love with classical music many times over.

The Philippine engagement of Tomescu was made possible by the Philippine American Life Insurance Company, Manila Pavilion Hotel and the Provincial Government of Nueva Ecija under Gov. Tomas N. Joson III.

* * *

Russian pianist Sergey Kuznetsov, prizewinner of the Cleveland International Piano Competition and three other competitions in Italy, Zurich and Spain, will make his Philippine debut May 7, 8 p.m., at the Philamlife Theater under the auspices of the Philamlife Insurance Company.

His program: Beethoven's Sonata No. 27 in E Minor, Op. 90; Tchaikovsky's Scherzo Humoristic and "Meditation" Op. 72, No. 5; Ravel's "Gaspard de la nuit"; Scriabin's Sonata No. 3 in F Sharp Minor, Op. 23; and Chopin's Sonata No. 3 in B Minor, Op. 58.

Other events in the new edition of the Great Performance Series at the Philamlife Theater are the Manila debut of classical guitarist Alvaro Pierri, gold medalist of three international guitar competitions in France, Brazil and Argentina, on Dec. 4; and the return engagement of Russian pianist Ilya Rashkovskiy on Dec. 8. For tickets, call 9007023 or 0906-7376901.

Quach returns

After an absence of many years, conductor Helen Quach returns to Manila's concert scene with the special engagement of the Manila Symphony Orchestra (MSO) with Cristine Coyiuto as piano soloist in Grieg's Concerto in A Minor. Quach with the MSO will perform on April 22, 4 p.m., at St. Cecilia's Hall, St. Scholastica's College, and on April 26, 8 p.m., at the CCP Main Theater. The finale program is Tchaikovsky's monumental Symphony No. 5 in E Minor.

STANDING ovation for Alexandru Tomescu and Mary Anne Espina

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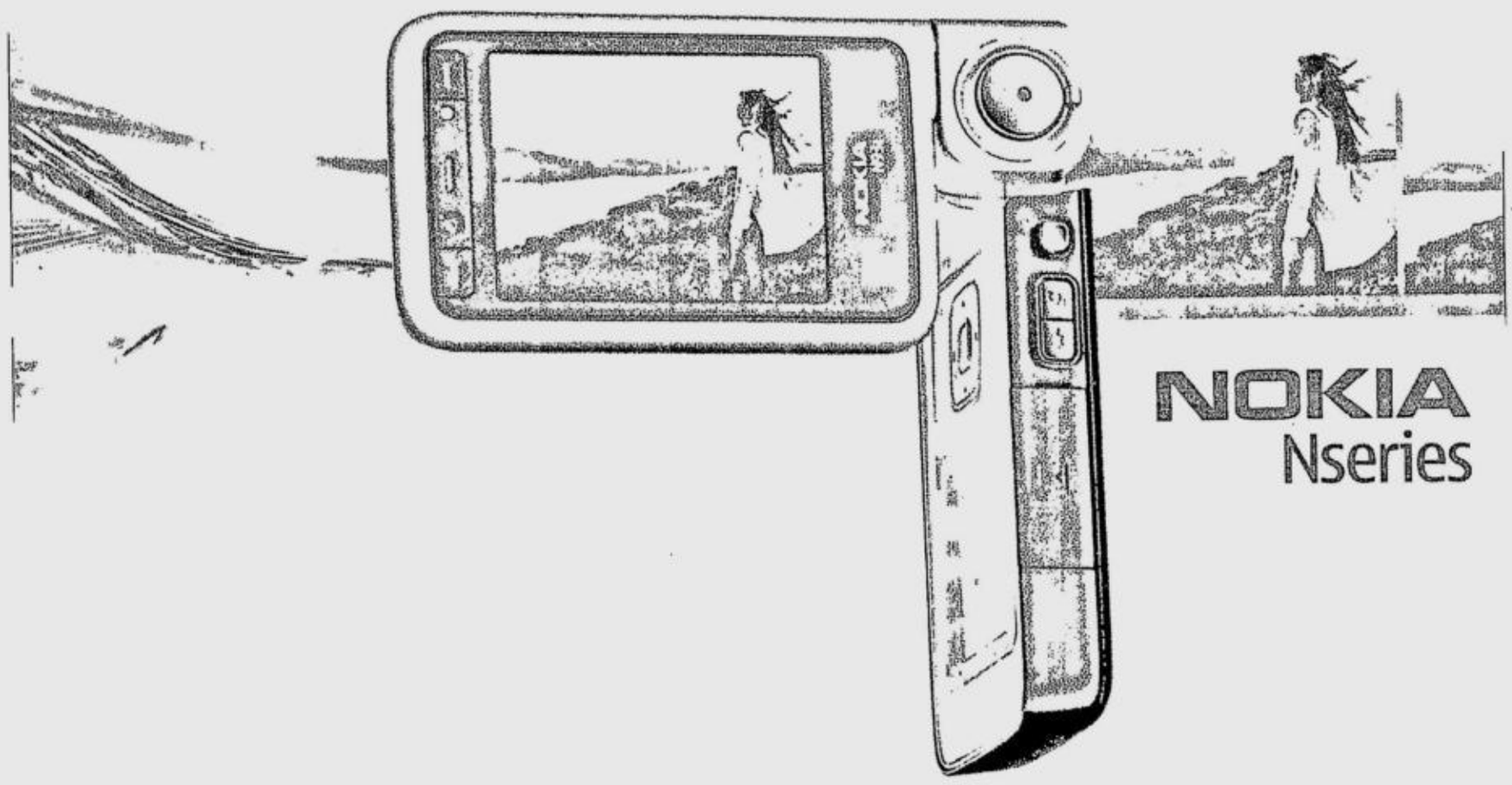

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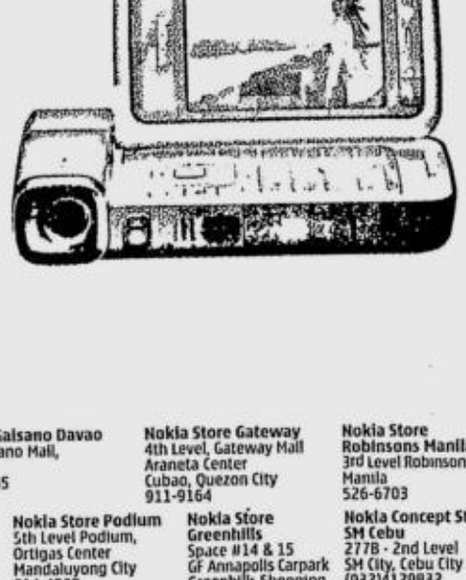

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God in a gadget

One of the world's best tech writers unshuffles the addictive history of the Apple iPod in the quirky, compulsively readable "The Perfect Thing"

"The Perfect Thing: How the iPod Shuffles Commerce, Culture and Coolness"
By Steven Levy
(Simon & Schuster, New York, 2006, 284 pages)

By Ruel S. De Vera

ONE OF THE MOST ODDLY fascinating images conjured by Steven Levy's "The Perfect Thing: How the iPod Shuffles Commerce, Culture and Coolness" is that of an entire population walking the streets in silence, every single one sporting a pair of white earbuds linked to Apple's iPod, a world of zombies contentedly tuning out of the real world and tuning into their own musical cocoon.

That idea drives home the ubiquity and the controversy surrounding Apple's groundbreaking MP3 player, which has officially taken over the world since its birth in 2001.

Yet Newsweek's Levy, one of the world's best tech writers and author of the fantastic "Insanely Great: The Life and Times of Macintosh, the Computer That Changed Everything," unspools not only the history of the iPod but also its impact on society, calling it "a six-ounce entanglement of cultural signifiers, evoking many things to many people" as well as "a near-universal object of desire."

The development of the iPod is woven closely into the motivations of Apple's iconoclastic CEO, Steve Jobs, who also figured prominently in "Insanely Great." In many ways, "The Perfect Thing" is a sequel to that book, and Jobs' story continues in this volume.

Levy, for example, notes that the iPod in its different avatars—the full-sized iPod, the Mini, the Nano, the Shuffle and the Video—transformed Apple from a computer company into a media juggernaut, noting that "the iPod's astounding success has come from a seemingly uncanny alignment of technology, design, culture and media that has thrust it into the center of just about every controversy in the digital age."

Levy introduces readers to other crucial players in the iPod story, most notably designer Jonathan Ive. As for the iPod's catchy name, Levy explains he "got the distinct impression that the iPod moniker won out not because of its brilliance but because Jobs had had enough of the name process and the hour was getting late."

"The Perfect Thing" also links the iPod's rise to that of the Sony Walkman decades earlier, but extols the iPod's being the fulcrum to a media revolution that gave birth to the industry of downloads, showing how the iPod pushed a conceptual probability into a "hard market reality."

Levy also retells Apple's iPod-infused hiccups, such as the brouhaha over the iPod's battery life, and the most damning one, the charge that the iPod causes people to become isolated from one another, to the point where people fear everyone's become disconnected, hence the dystopian vision of an iPod-pervaded society, sort of "As the Clickwheel Turns."

Addiction

The most fascinating aspect of "The Perfect Thing" is Levy's reflection of the iPod's impact on everyday life, as well as the obsessive behavior it triggers, something akin to a drug.

He chronicles, vignettes such as the iPod

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Daring publication

By Constantino C. Tejero

ART MAGAZINES ARE HARD TO COME BY in this country. When even film magazines, which tackle a popular art form, come and go and in spurts—what more with something that deals with a highbrow subject?

They can't compete on a market swamped with glossies, glam publications, self-help manuals. These publications don't sell, period. They interest only the culturati, specialists and researchers.

An art monthly may appear today then disappear next month. A literary magazine has more longevity (though only by a few issues). Obviously, those that remain are the ones subsidized by government agencies and academic institutions.

A daring move then is the publication of Muse, an arts-and-culture bimonthly which came out in December. It is published by Mediawise Communications "in support of the Cebu Chamber of Commerce & Industry, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and the Arts and Culture Committee of the League of Corporate Foundations."

It helps that the publisher is Ramoncito Ocampo Cruz, a businessman and corporate person who is also an artist. In fact, he is an award-winning painter with a Fine Arts degree from University of Santo Tomas.

And it also helps that its editor is Alya Honasan, a magazine journalist with a background in theater and art history.

Happy meeting

In a message, Honasan elaborates on this happy meeting of corporate support and cultural promotion: "It's a marriage that's been a long time coming. Corporations have happily become more conscientious about giving back to the communities they thrive in—and what better cause to champion than the appreciation of the richness of our national heritage?"

In other words, the publication of this magazine has long been fated.

The result is a glossy with an attractive format (not too big, not too small, not too thick, not too slim, the paper firm yet pliable); a visually pleasing layout (large illustrations, sharp-resolution photos, breathing space); and substantial yet readable text (not too academic, as most articles on arts and culture are, but suitable for easy reading, as magazine features should be). There are a few typos here and there, but that's only indicative of a publication's birth pangs.

A wise move is the grounding of the magazine not exclusively in arts and culture but also incorporating travel and cultural tourism in its pages. In fact, its masthead announces it as "inspiring culture and travel."

More importantly, "art" here connotes not just its highbrow application but also includes "its many different forms, incarnations and interpretations."

Reason for being

The editor's message lays out the publication's *raison d'être* as well as gives as broad a definition of *art* as can be: "We hope this magazine provides even more evidence that art is not confined to insulated rooms and esoteric experiences—it finds its greater significance by becoming a part of everyday life. It may be the installation of a young artist with a unique perspective, or a symphony played by the country's premier orchestra, but they both must work their magic on an audience, though not necessarily a captive one. That's why art can also be a superbly designed chair, or an acoustic live performance, or even the remains of an old fort in the Philippine South yielding proof of how an ancient piece of stone helped shape the Filipino's existence hundreds of years ago."

Muse carries an impressive lineup of writers tackling a list of grabbing topics. Its March-April issue will be launched on March 16 during the opening of publisher Cruz's third solo exhibit of paintings, "Musings," which runs until March 24 in 1/of Gallery, L/2, Serendra, Bonifacio High Street, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig.

As bookender, the magazine carries a calendar of cultural events and art exhibitions. So, what else is not there for a magazine not to sell?

Martel's 'Between East and West' to be launched

THE CULTURAL EXCHANGES IN the last decades suggest the rise of a global culture, one that is rooted in the traditions of the past as well as the present, and in the heritage of the East and the West.

Yet despite the unprecedented pace of change, certain themes remain constant—women and their varying struggles with identity and independence, be it in America in the 1950s or in present-day Afghanistan; the age-old clash between Islam and the Western world; and love and power from the time of the French renaissance that still resonate today.

There is no statement more powerful and enduring than the arts of a nation. In Thailand, America, Japan or India, the arts speak of a people and the intimate and often inextricable connection between art and life, between the distinct cultural influences of East and West that have come to define their heritage.

People are the cultural ambassadors of today's world. From the Philippines, Singapore and America, in divergent spheres of life—in literature, the visual arts, in diplomacy, in architecture and urban planning—National Artists F. Sionil José and Arturo Luz, Asia Society president emeritus Nicholas Platt, and Singaporean architect William Lim bring us glimpses of their worlds and leave us with a greater appreciation of present realities as well as the universal aspects of life.

"Between East and West" sheds light on these and other provocative subjects. Written by Tonette Martel, the book is a collection of essays on the places, themes, and ideas that give meaning to the times we live in, and to a world brought closer together by the forces of globalization and information technology. It explores the melding of the heritage of East and West and the cultural exchanges between them.

Sensory feast

With images from the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Rockefeller Collection of Asian Art, the Prasart Museum in Thailand, the Asia Society in New York, and specially commissioned photographs of contemporary Bangkok and New York, the book promises to be a sensory feast.

TONETTE P. Martel, author of Between East and West (2007)

"Between East and West" is published by Anvil Publications and designed by 2006 National Book Awardee Guillermo "Ige" Ramos.

"Looking back at these essays which were written over the last 10 years, it became clear to me that I had to look at the essays again and rewrite them from two different vantage points—that is the merging of cultures in contemporary life, as well as the universal themes that still define everyday life," says Martel.

"The world has grown closer together as a consequence of globalization and the spread of information technology," she explains. "Yet the Philippines has been heir to cultural interchanges for centuries. I looked back to my youth and realized that those in my generation had grown up with so many of the cultural aspects of both East and West, it was as though we were caught between two worlds, and that explains the title of the book."

Of writing the book, Tonette says, "It taught me that people are more similar than they are different. We all share the same hopes, dreams, fears and aspirations. Yet each culture has a unique way of expressing these realities. We live in a world today that compels us to open our eyes to many truths all at once. I hope the reader will come away with the notion that we are a part of one world—that the cultural aspects of East and West and the merging of both will continue to shape our lives and stay with us."

Born and raised in Manila, Martel received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Marymount Manhattan College in New York and a Master of Arts degree from New York University.

"Between East and West" will be launched on the evening of March 15, at Red in the Makati Shangri-La. A portion of the book sales during the launch will benefit the Virlanie Foundation.

New from Jodi Picoult

JODI PICOULT WAS BORN AND raised in Long Island, New York where she admittedly had an uneventful childhood. While studying creative writing at Princeton, she was able to publish two short stories in Seventeen Magazine. It was after getting her first pay check for a story that Picoult realized that she in fact wanted to become a writer.

Achieving her dream, however, did not come easily. She took a series of jobs such as an editor and an eighth-grade English teacher to cover her rent and other expenses. Soon after, she entered Harvard to pursue a Master's Degree in Education.

Picoult got married to Tim Van Leer, whom she met in Princeton during college. She wrote her first novel, "Songs of the Humpback Whale" (1992) while she was pregnant with her first child. Balancing her priorities both as a writer and mother is a tough job but she believes that it has also made her better at what she does.

JODI Picoult

In "Plain Truth" (2000), Picoult presents a story of how a shocking murder of a newborn infant tests the heart and soul of the lawyer who steps in to defend the young mother accused of killing her own child; while the novel "Second Glance" tells the story of a love that transcends the limits of time. In 2003, Picoult was awarded the New England Bookseller Award for Fiction.

Her latest book, "Nineteen Minutes," is a thriller about a high school shooting that took place in an ordinary town. Jodi Picoult is the new writer of DC Comics' Wonder Woman series following the departure of Allan Heinberg. Her first issue (#6) will hit stands in the latter half of March 2007.

Powerbooks Speciálty Store is a complete one-stop bookstore with branches at Greenbelt 4 (757-6428 to 29), Megamall (635-2898 to 99), Alabang Town Center (850-5662 to 63), Glorietta 3 (752-7075), Shangri-La (638-0023/25), Robinson's Place Ermita (523-3334/ 524-3448), Mall of Asia (556-0244), and Festival Supermall (850-8221).

New books by Narita Manuel Gonzalez

NARITA MANUEL GONZALEZ, wife of the late National Artist NVM Gonzalez, launches three new books—"Oriole Call," "A Meeting in the Rain Forest," and "Seven Short Stories"—as well as two other previously published ones, "Danny's New Pet Is an Iguana" and "Titcher." Joining her at the launching ceremony in Vargas Hall at UP are her publisher, Gloria F. Rodriguez, of Giraffe Books (right), and writers Vic G. Tirol, Lorna Kalaw Tirol, and Mari Henson.

God in a gadget

From page E1

wars (on trains, people would try to trump each other as to who had the cooler song being played); iPod crime (ruffians mugging people for their iPod, the white earbuds giving the victims away); as well as the eternal battle between playlists, crowned by a very nuanced discussion of what "coolness" really is in terms of consumer products.

Levy explains how the iPod transforms everyday life into a movie starring you with your own selected soundtrack. The book's somewhat goofy turn investigating whether or not the iPod mysteriously "drew on mystical powers to choose their songs" and a surprisingly thorough investigation into whether or not the iPod's Shuffle mode really was as random as it claims. A little looney? Yes. Brilliant? Absolutely.

Levy remembers even George W. Bush uses an iPod, as does Pope Benedict XVI. Levy even remembers what Microsoft CEO Bill Gates said upon examining the iPod for the first time: "It's only for Macintosh?"

Yet the day when Jobs decided that the iPod would service Windows users as well was identified as a turning point, one that enabled the iPod to truly be dominant, leading to what is now called, of course, "the iPod economy."

All this is written in Levy's exhaustively researched yet extremely reader-friendly prose. For anyone curious about where it really came from, "The Perfect Thing" is a rousing read, a compulsively readable tale of technology.

And to illustrate and embody the iPod's charm, Levy even wrote "The Perfect Thing" into a shuffle of a book. He wrote the later chapters to be self-contained, mixing up the chapters as the book ran on the presses. So now, any two copies of Steven Levy's "The Perfect Thing" may just possess a different order of chapters—yet remarkably reads the same. Just perfect.

Available in hardcover from National Book Store.

Search for scholars and young musicians

THE UNITED WORLD COLLEGES, IN COORdination with the United World College-Philippines, is searching for two top-caliber fourth year high school students interested in pursuing a two-year international baccalaureate course abroad.

One of the scholars must also be a gifted young musician (between 16-18 years old) who is a pianist or a string player (violin, viola, or cello) with a strong background in classical music and performance.

In the past, Filipino scholars have been sent to UWCs in Canada, Hong Kong, Italy, USA, Wales, and Venezuela. For school years 2007-2009, one Filipino student will be nominated for a full tuition scholarship at the Li Po Chun UWC of Hong Kong, while the musically gifted student will receive a full tuition scholarship to the UWC of the Adriatic in Italy. The scholarships cover tuition, board, lodging and health insurance.

Applicants for Li Po Chun UWC must belong to the Top 10 percent of their class. Applicants for UWC of the Adriatic will be screened primarily on musical criteria but will also be interviewed on their readiness to participate fully in the college's academic, multicultural and community service programs.

Interested students and their parents should visit www.ph.uwc.org to learn more about the program and the scholarships, and to download application forms. They may also contact Gillian Virata at info@ph.uwc.org or telefax 6350294 to request forms by e-mail or fax, and for more information. Deadline for submission of application forms is March 22.

Must-read book for March

THE MUCH-ANTICIPATED follow-up to the popular and best-selling "Shopaholic" series by Sophie Kinsella hails the return of heroine Becky Brandon (née Bloomwood) now married, pregnant and working as head personal shopper for a hip, new boutique.

"Shopaholic and Baby," the latest installment of the "Shopaholic" franchise, finds commercially insatiable Bex overjoyed as she shops for two in every upscale baby shop and catalogue in London. She wants it all to be perfect for her baby, and she snags everything from a designer nursery, celebrity must-have obstetrician, to a pair of the moment's most-coveted boots.

But when the celebrity obstetrician turns out to be her husband Luke's glamorous, intellectual ex-girlfriend, Becky's perfect world starts to crumble. Complicating an otherwise uneventful pregnancy, Becky begins to suspect that Luke is having an affair. So she hires a private detective to track down the truth, which naturally sets off a madcap romp that turns Becky's world upside-down.

For chick lit enthusiasts with babies of their own, or for those who covet one, Kinsella mines a rich vein by tweaking 21st-century glossy-magazine obsessions: sonograms, the hottest baby strollers and tricked-out birthing rooms. Kinsella's ode to baby blues is both sly and slapstick.

The book is available at PowerBooks Specialty Store, which has branches at Greenbelt 4 (7576428/29), Megamall (6352898/99), Alabang Town Center (8505662/63), Glorietta 3 (7527075), Shangri-La (638-0023/25), Robinsons Place Ermita (5233334/5243448), MOA (5560244) and Festival Supermall (8508221).

12 fellows for the 46th UP National Writers Workshop announced

LIKHAAN: THE UP INSTITUTE of Creative Writing announces the 12 fellows selected for the 46th UP National Writers Workshop to be held at the AIM Lodge, Camp John Hay, Baguio City, March 25-April 1.

The fellows are: Katrina P. Tuvera and Daryll Jane Delgado (fiction in English); Conchitina Cruz and Mark Anthony Cayanan (poetry in English); Lawrence Ypil, Sandra Nicole Roldan and Adam David (creative nonfiction in English); Eugene Evasco and Eros Atalia (fiction in Filipino); Jerry Gracio and Edgar Samar (poetry in Filipino); and José Dennis Teodosio (drama in Filipino).

Like the fellows of last year's revitalized workshop, the fellows for this year are advanced writers with previous workshop experience, publications or degrees in Literature or Creative Writing. The fellows have submitted one work for critical evaluation by the group. They will also be expected to make a presentation about a work in progress and their own writing practice.

The teaching panel for this year's workshop will include UP ICW director Vim Nadera, J. Neil Garcia (this year's workshop director), professor emeritus Gémino H. Abad, National Artist and professor emeritus Bienvenido Lumbera, National Artist and College of Arts and Letters dean Virgilio S. Almario, Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo, José Y. Dalisay Jr., Charlson L. Ong, Carla Pacis, Jun Cruz Reyes, Lilia Quindoza Santiago, Ricardo M. de Ungria, Roland Tolentino, and Rene O. Villanueva.

The chosen fellows are advised to call the UP ICW at 9221830 or call/SMS Eva Garcia-Cadiz at 0927-9245242 to confirm attendance and receive further instructions.

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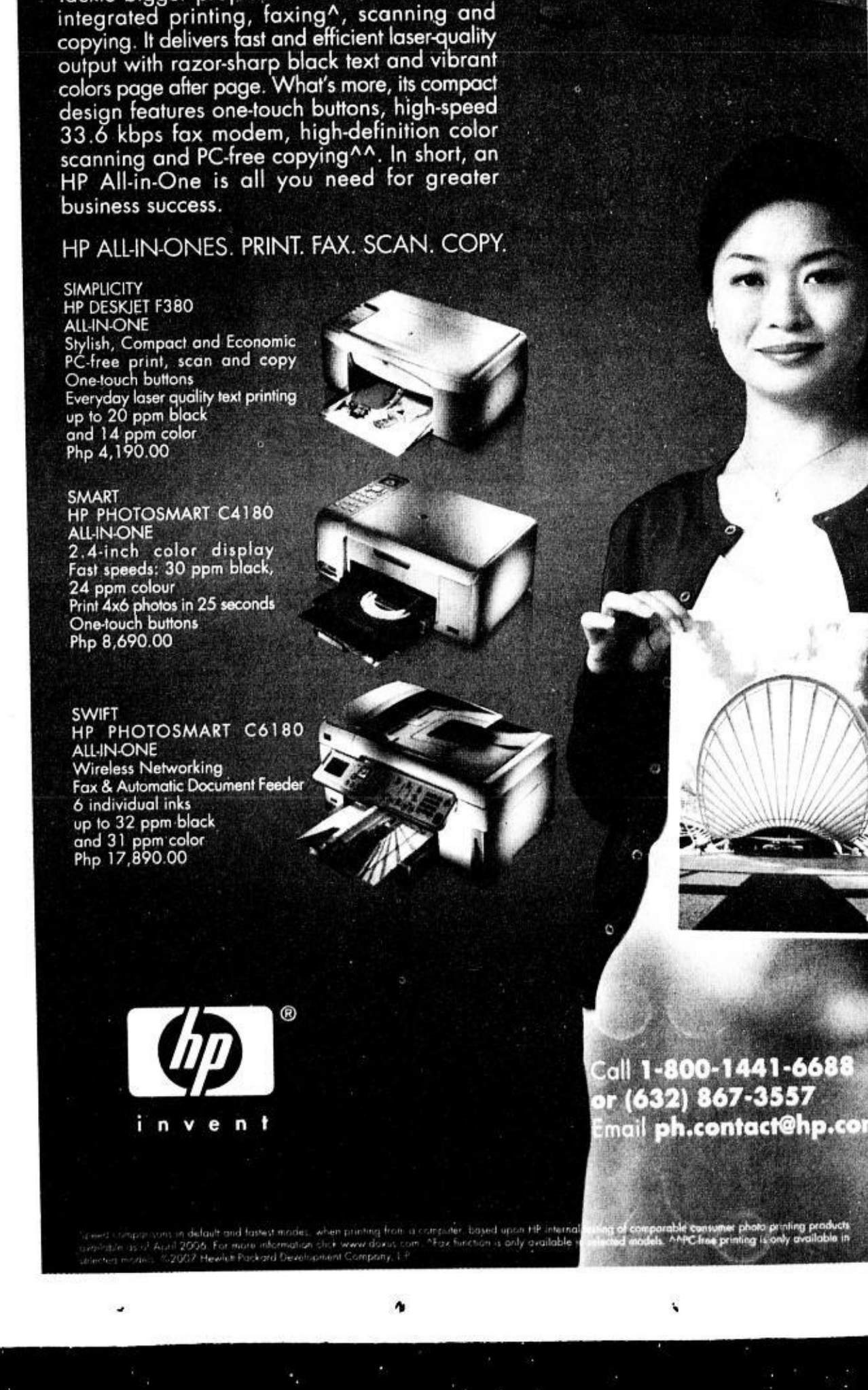

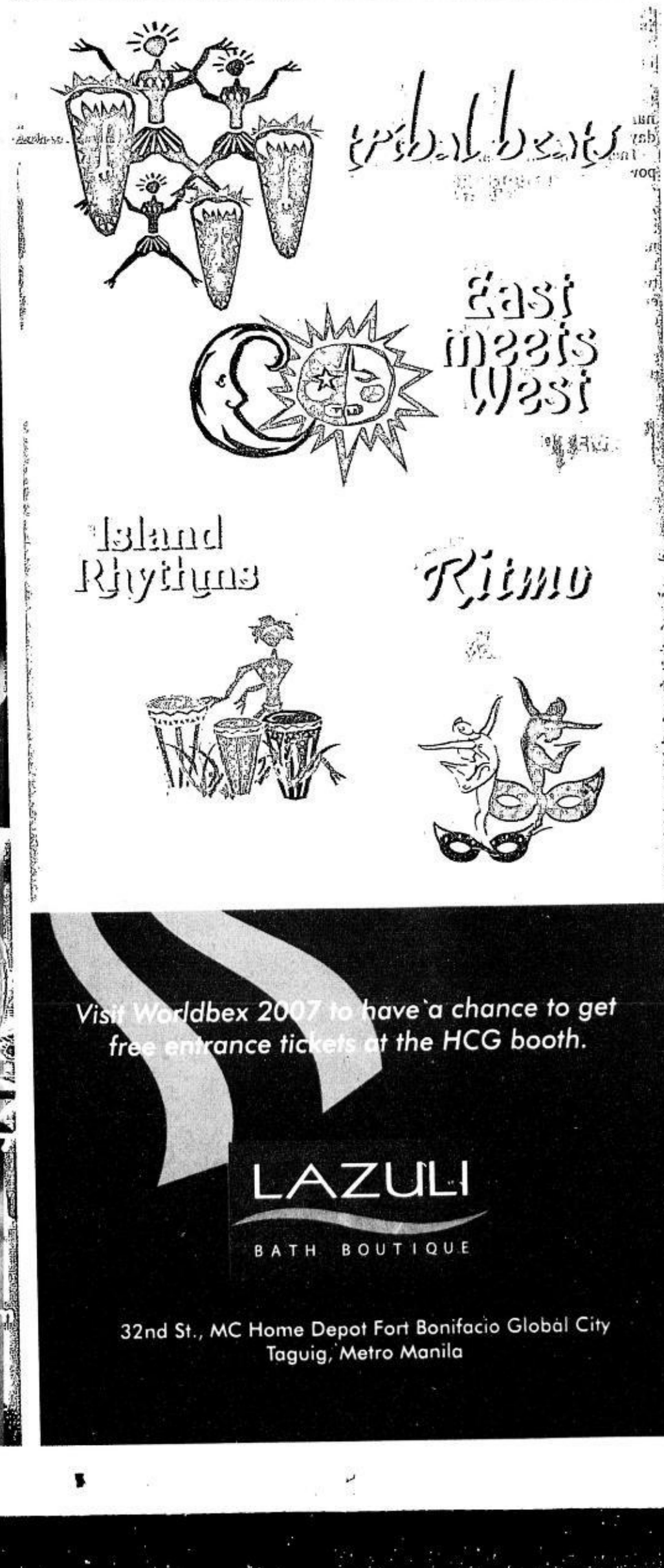

BOOKS AND ROSES

Instituto Cervantes hosts World Book Day

ON APRIL 21, THE INSTITUTO Cervantes in Manila will join all the international celebrations on World Book Day by organizing a series of cultural events open to the general public.

A day of books and roses… Although not celebrated in the Philippines, the International Day of the Book is an important event in several European countries like Spain, and Instituto Cervantes aims to establish the date as a tradition in the Manila cultural calendar.

The International Day of the Book (or World Book Day) is a yearly event organized every April 23 to promote reading, publishing and the protection of intellectual property through copyright. The idea of this celebration originated in Catalonia, Spain, where on St. George's Day males and females traditionally exchange a rose for the gift of a book.

This tradition inspired a Spanish delegation, supported by some 20 other countries, to propose to the Unesco a resolution requesting the proclamation of April 23 of each year as "World Day of the Book." It was unanimously adopted in November of 1995 and celebrated ever since. The 23rd of April was also considered as it is a symbolic date in world literature. Curiously in the year 1616 on this very day died literary legends Miguel de Cervantes, William Shakespeare and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. It also happens to be the date of birth or death of other prominent authors: Maurice Druon, Halldór Laxness, Vladimir Nabokov, Josep Pla and Manuel Mejía Vallejo.

In celebration of this special occasion, Instituto Cervantes will organize a whole-day Open House with many fun activities like concerts, film showings, Spanish food fair, photo and declamation contests on April 21, 10 a.m.-11 p.m. It will begin with a Book Market where Instituto Cervantes will offer at token prices over 4,000 brand-new books.

Aside from the Instituto Cervantes, the market will include a sale of books by popular Filipino publishing firms and leading bookstores at 20 percent off! Also following the tradition during the Day of the Book in Spain, a rose will be gifted to every book buyer!

Guided tours of the Instituto Cervantes building will be organized at 11 a.m., 12 noon, 1 p.m., 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. You can also get the chance to attend a free Spanish class for beginners! A 20-percent discount off the regular price awaits new students who enroll on this day! (Only valid for certain schedules and full payment).

And for poetry lovers, a Poetry Reading Contest will be organized at the patio of Instituto Cervantes 4:30 p.m. El Mejor Poema/The Best Poem invites poetry lovers to bring their favorite poem and read it aloud! There will be two categories: Spanish and Other Languages. Cool prizes await the winners! Those interested can sign up at 5261482-85 (look for Marie).

Special movie screenings with the theme Great Books on Screen will start 11 a.m. Films based on literary works will be projected at the Salón de Actos theater. Schedule is as follows: 2 p.m.—"El Coronel No Tiene Quien le Escriba," directed by A. Ripstein in 1987; 6 p.m.—"El Método," directed by Marcelo Piñeyro in 2005.

Kids will also have the chance to enjoy three Spanish movies for children (at 11 a.m., 2 and 6 p.m.). Fancy karaoke? Practice your singing abilities in Spanish! A marathon karaoke will be set up 11 a.m.-6 p.m.

And in the evening, to top off the entire day, Instituto Cervantes will host the Día del Libro Fiesta with a Latin band, a jazz concert, Spanish food… and lots of fun!

INSTITUTO Cervantes director José "Pepe" Rodríguez with veteran columnist Rosalinda Orosa

First winners of Quijano de Manila Award announced

VETERAN COLUMNIST ROSALINDA Orosa of the Philippine Star and popular historian Ambeth Ocampo of the Philippine Daily Inquirer are the first winners of the Primer Premio de Periodismo Quijano de Manila (1st Quijano de Manila Journalism Award) in a ceremony held at the Instituto Cervantes Library.

The awards were handed out by Instituto Cervantes director José "Pepe" Rodríguez during ceremonies at the new Instituto Cervantes building on T.M. Kalaw Street, Ermita, Manila.

Launched in 2005 by the Embassy of Spain and the Instituto Cervantes in Manila, the journalism prize was named in honor of National Artist Nick Joaquin, who wrote under the pen name Quijano de Manila. It has for its theme the significance of Spanish as an international language as well as its special interest for Filipinos: "Relevance of Spanish culture in Today's World."

Orosa won the first prize of P75,000 for her piece "A Treatise for Spanish," published in Starweek magazine on Nov. 27, 2005. Ocampo, who chairs the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, was awarded the second prize of P25,000 for his column essay "Signs of Identity" in the November 30, 2005, issue of the INQUIRER.

A third piece, Benigno Benabarre's "In Heaven, Only Spanish Is Spoken," was given an honorable mention for its originality and in its ability to convey information with clarity.

Entries considered for the award were those published in Philippine magazines, newspapers or broadcast on local radio or television, and submitted to Instituto Cervantes on Jan. 1, 2005-Jan. 10, 2006.

AMBETH Ocampo

Pagsanjan celebrates heritage Bangkero Fest

PAGSANJAN WILL STAGE THE NINTH Pagsanjan Bangkero Festival March 15-18.

According to Mayor Jeorge (ER Ejercito) Estregan, the festival, with this year's theme "Pagsanjan Falls! Kalikasang Totoo… Sikat sa Buong Mundo!," advocates environmental protection and the promotion of local tourism.

Pagsanjan, which once served as provincial capital of Laguna, is home to historic spots such as the century-old Pagsanjan Arch or róyal gate, ancestral homes, and the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the town's patroness.

The festival includes a host of activities such as a marathon, boat races, fluvial and land parades, drum and lyre band competitions, and other sporting and special events.

There will also be the search for the Lakan at Binibining Pagsanjan, the Ginoong Bangkero 2006 and the Inter-School Videoke challenge to tap local talents.

The festival's highlight is on March 18, with dance exhibitions, the final round of the boat race, native games and the colorful fluvial parade competition on the scenic Pagsanjan River.

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And the 2006 car of the year is...

At the 3rd Car of the Year Philippines (Coty-P) awards dinner held March 8 at the Rockwell Tent, Makati, 11 category winners, four Special Award winners and the Car of the Year 2006 was proclaimed, finally ending months of suspense.

The Awards Night followed seven weekends of instrumented and qualitative testing of 37 motor vehicles starting in November 2006 and continuing in January and February 2007 at the Forest Hills Golf and Country Club in Antipolo, Rizal.

The Honda Civic 1.8S emerged tops during these tests, and was consequently awarded overall as the car of the year for 2006.

In its respective sub-categories, the following vehicles were also awarded: the Kia Rio in the subcompact category; the Honda Civic 1.8S in the compact category; the Mazda 6 2.3L in the executive sedan category; the Volvo S60 2.0T in the luxury car category; the Mercedes-Benz E280 Elegance in the Ultra-Luxury category; the Mitsubishi Strada GLS in the pick-up category; the Toyota Innova for the entry-level MPV category; the Mitsubishi Grandis for the luxury MPV category; the Subaru Forester 2.5XT for the entry-level SUV, the Subaru Outback 3.0R for the luxury SUV category, and the Mercedes-Benz ML 350 for the ultra-luxury SUV category.

Special award winners were the Honda Civic 1.8S for best value for money; the Mercedes-Benz E280 for best safety package; the Nissan Murano for best overall design; and the Audi A6 3.0 TDI Quattro for best technical innovation.

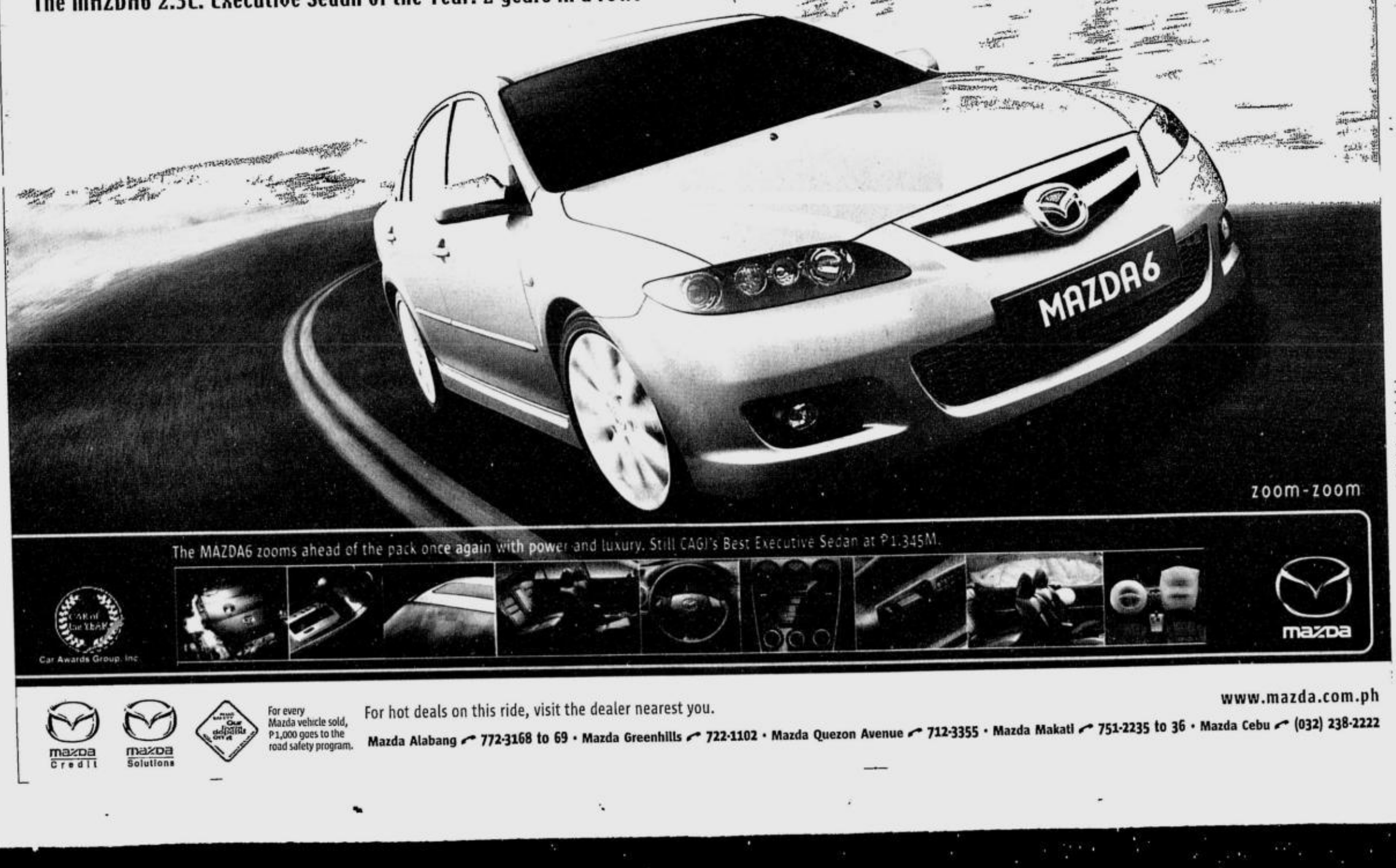
Coty-P, now on its third year, was initiated by the Car Awards Group Inc (Cagi), a non-stock, nonprofit organization of motoring journalists from various newspapers, car magazines, television car programs and online media. Cagi maintains its independence and avoids any conflict of interest by not seeking or accepting financial support from car manufacturers and by not charging them an entrance fee for participation in Coty.

Cagi board

The 2006-07 Cagi board of directors consists of Aida Sevilla Mendoza, Philippine Daily Inquirer motoring columnist, president; Alvin Uy of motioncars.com, vice president; Lester Dizon, editor of Motorcycle Magazine, treasurer (on leave), Roberto Consunji, 4x4 Off-Road editor of Top Gear, secretary

CAR/ F2

Apparently, a year just wasn't enough.
The MAZDA6 2.3L. Executive Sedan of the Year. 2 years in a row.



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And the 2006 car of the year is . . .

From page F.1

PICTURES BY ROMY HOMILLADA

TAKASHI Sekiguchi, Honda Cars Philippines president, proudly holds plaque after bagging the overall Car of the Year award at the Rockwell Tent.

AIDA Sevilla-Mendoza, left, president of the Car Awards Group Inc, and Eric Tagle of Philippine Allied Enterprises, hand over the trophy to Sekiguchi.

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and Aris R. Ilagan of Manila Bulletin, public relations officer.

Cagi founding president Armin Amio, managing editor of Gadgets magazine and 2005-06 Cagi president Manny de los Reyes, editor-in-chief of Speed magazine and Philippine Star motoring page contributor, make up the Cagi Council of Advisers.

The Cagi testing committee -- which set the testing guidelines, supervised the instrumented and qualitative tests and tallied the score sheets emanating from the tests -- was headed by Top Gear technical editor Ferman Lao with Ulysses Ang of motioncars.com and Inquirer motoring columnist Andrei Palma as members. The tally sheets and results were audited by Sycip Gorres Velayo & Co (SGV) before the winners were announced.

Cagi tested production cars that were available on the market during the preceding year. Thus, the Coty-P winners proclaimed at the 1st Car of the Year Awards Night on Feb. 24, 2005 were vehicles sold in the Philippines in 2004, and the winners of the 2nd Coty Awards on March 30, 2006 were cars and trucks sold here in 2005.

Entries that do not win in their respective categories are excluded from the next Coty-P unless they have undergone major engineering changes or have new safety equipment. This partially explains why there were fewer entries for the 3rd Coty-P. Another reason is that some models that could have participated in the 3rd Coty-P were unavailable, having been sold out before the tests began.

A month or so before the tests start, Cagi informs car manufacturers about the test schedule that is arranged according to category over a period of six or seven weekends. For the 3rd Coty-P, the test sessions were held at a closed-off area within the grounds of the Forest Hills Golf and Country, which was also the test venue for the 2nd Coty-P. But this time a longer, more challenging route for the tests was staked out by the test marshals, Applied Leisure in Sales and Operations (Also) group members and former rally racers Raul Asuncion, Joey Lanuza, Ernie Reyes and Barry Ortiz.

Entries

The entries for the March 8 awards fell within 11 categories based on suggested retail price (SRP): Subcompact Car (P750,000 and below): Chevrolet Aveo, Chevrolet Spark, Hyundai Getz (2005 Subcompact Car of the Year), Kia Rio and Suzuki Swift;

Compact Car (P750,000 up to P1,100,000): Ford Focus Trend, Honda Civic, Mitsubishi Lancer (2005 Compact Car of the Year);

Executive Car (P1.1 million - P2.6 million): Honda Accord, Mazda6 (2005 Executive Car of the Year and 2005 Car of the Year), Mitsubishi Galant 240M, Subaru Legacy, Toyota Camry;

Luxury Car (P2.6 million - P4.0 million): Audi A4 1.8 TDI, Chrysler 300C (2005 Luxury Car of the Year), Volvo S60

Ultra-Luxury Car (P4.0 million - P6.0 million): Audi A6 3.0 TDI, Mercedes-Benz E280 Elegance. No unit of the 2005 winner in this category, the BMW 530i, was available for testing.

Entry-Level Sport Utility Vehicle or SUV (P1.6 million and below): Hyundai Santa Fe, Kia Sportage, Mazda Tribute (2005 Entry-Level SUV of the Year), Subaru Forester, Suzuki Grand Vitara, Toyota RAV4;

Luxury SUV (P1.6 million - P4.0 million): Honda Pilot, Jeep Commander, Nissan Murano, Subaru Outback;

Ultra-Luxury SUV (P4.0 million - P6.0 million): Mercedes-Benz ML350 (2005 Ultra-Luxury SUV of the Year).

Entry-Level Multipurpose Vehicle or MPV (P1.2 million and below): Toyota Avanza, Toyota Innova (2005 Entry-Level MPV of the Year);

Luxury MPV (P1.2 million and above): Chrysler Pacifica, Mitsubishi Grandis (2005 Luxury MPV of the Year), Toyota Previa;

Pickup Truck: Ford Ranger (2005 Pickup of the Year), Mitsubishi Strada.

Special awards

Best value for money winners represent the most "bang for the buck" while retaining good levels of comfort, refinement and utility.

Best safety package winners ultimately make the occupants safe in case of an accident with its comprehensive list of both passive and active safety features.

Best in overall design winners blend both beauty and ergonomics in one seamless and well-thought-of package.

Best technical innovation winners contain at least one innovation that leads to better performance for the driver.

Winners displayed at Mias

The category winners and the Car of the Year will be displayed at the Manila International Auto Show (Mias) at the World Trade Center from March 29 to April 1. Worldbex Services International, the organizer of Mias, is the main sponsor of the 3rd Coty Awards Night, while Rockwell Land Corp is the venue sponsor.

The 3rd Coty-P was made possible by the continuing support of Automobile Association Philippines (AAP), Road Safety Partner of Car of the Year 2006; Petron Corp, Fuel Partner; Bridgestone, Performance Tire Partner; and Sony Ericsson, Mobile Phone Partner; together with San Miguel Corp, Manila North Tollways Corp, Standard Insurance Co Inc, Speedlab and Forest Hills Golf and Country Club.

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

BABY BLUES

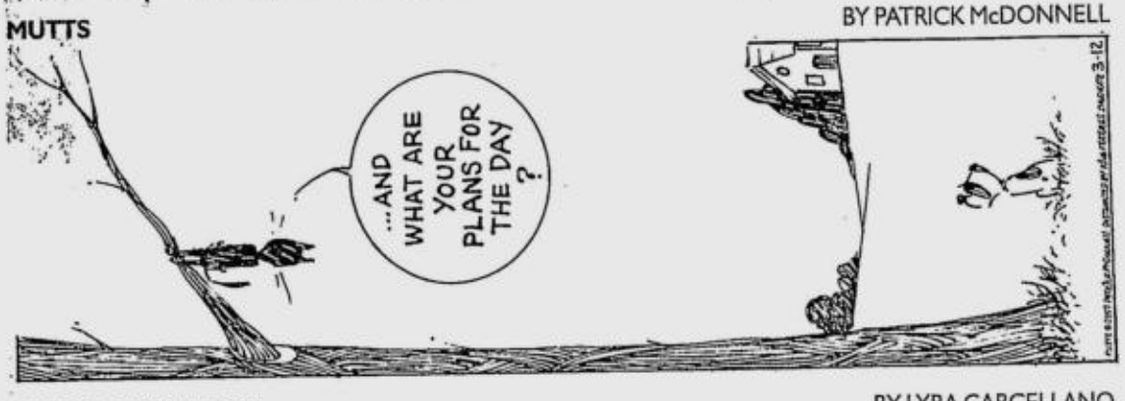
BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL



LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

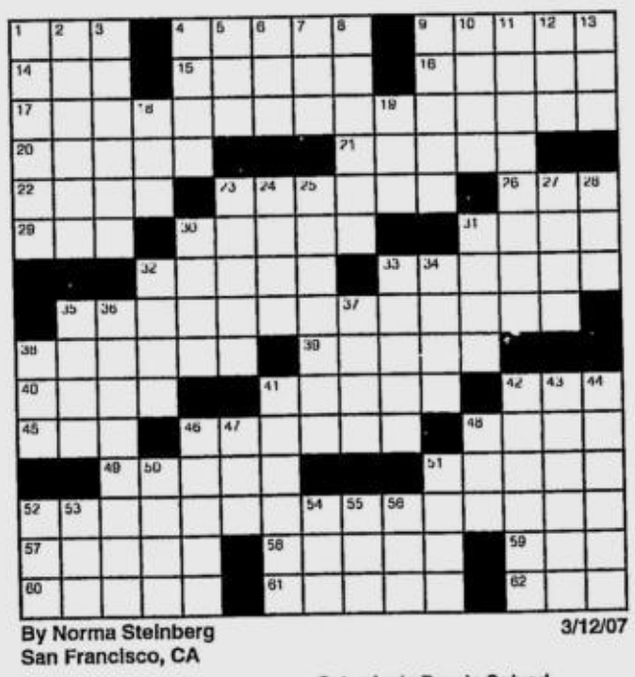
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

By Norma Steinberg
San Francisco, CA

3/12/07



ACROSS
1 Expert, briefly
4 U.S.-Mex.-Can. union
9 Endorses
14 Chemist's hangout
15 Go-between
16 Sneeze sound
17 Insufficient penalty
20 Flat-bottomed boats
21 Everything in Berlin
22 Thick head of hair
23 Metallic thumps
26 Shade tree
29 Math subj.
30 Palm branch
31 Frivolity
32 Georgia fruit
33 Add to the accumulation
35 Roadway caution
38 Cringes
39 Bermuda, for one
40 Lofty poems
41 Overcast and clear, e.g.
42 Hair care goo
45 Drenched
46 Invitees
48 Austen or Goodall
49 Fred Astaire's hometown
51 Terra __
52 Respond impulsively
57 Tubular pasta
58 Russell or Cameron
59 Before of yore
60 Zones
61 Respect
62 Blushing

DOWN
1 Cell-free blood
2 Playful prankster
3 Lozenge-shaped
4 Catches forty winks
5 Back in time
6 Marshy wetland
7 Letters that blast
8 Close by
9 Cries out loud
10 Lot size
11 Swindler
12 Boxing stats
13 Drunkard
18 Veneration
19 Wapiti
23 Unrefined
24 Lomond or Ness
25 Disengages, in a way
27 Tolstoy and Gorcey
28 Guys
30 Gala celebration
31 Secluded valley
32 Military E-3s
33 Layers
34 Nuptial vows
35 Facet
36 In matched pairings
37 Component piece
38 Holy cowl
41 Google for something
42 Assemble
43 Total
44 Jumped
46 Microsoft man
47 "Weird Al" Yankovic movie
48 Ex-QB Namath
50 "Drowning __"
51 Chastity Bono's mom
52 Hot tub
53 That girl
54 Cuban gold
55 Part of M-F
56 Pair count

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

T	O	G	A	S	■	A	B	A	S	H	■	P	O	P
A	D	O	L	E	S	C	E	N	C	E	■	A	P	E
R	E	D	E	C	O	R	A	T	E	S	■	L	A	P
■	■	■	E	L	E	M	E	N	T	■	P	L	Y	■
A	S	G	A	R	D	■	■	■	T	O	R	I	E	S
B	E	R	E	N	I	C	E	S	■	N	E	T	S	■
A	D	A	R	■	E	L	L	I	S	■	F	A	C	E
C	A	S	A	■	R	E	A	D	E	■	U	T	E	S
I	N	S	T	■	S	A	T	E	D	■	T	I	N	S
■	C	H	E	S	■	R	E	S	I	D	E	N	C	E
G	H	O	S	T	S	■	■	■	M	I	D	G	E	S
E	A	P	■	O	C	T	A	V	E	S	■	■	■	■
N	I	P	■	O	R	I	G	I	N	A	L	S	I	N
T	R	E	■	P	E	R	E	S	T	R	O	I	K	A
S	S	R	■	S	W	E	D	E	■	M	O	R	E	Y

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3/12/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: Many of you are multitalented. You're courageous about doing your own thing. In fact, you might be considered to be a bit over-the-top. You leap in where others fear to tread, because living dangerously has an attraction for you. The year ahead promises wonderful opportunities for intimate relationships and many social, fun-loving occasions. Enjoy yourself in 2007!
Birthdate of: James Taylor; singer; Aaron Eckhart, actor; Liza Minnelli, singer/performer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Your impulsive feelings are very strong today. You have an urge building up within you to do something different. You want adventure, and you want it now!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You're not casual about money issues today. (Oh, no.) You might even jealously guard whatever you own. You feel quite territorial about your share of something.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Be careful during discussions with partners and close friends today. Your intensity about something could blow someone else out of the water. Make your point, but don't jump up and down screaming.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You have some good ideas to introduce to the workplace today. Your move for reform could include getting rid of dead weight and what is no longer really needed.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Parents should lighten up with kids today. Take it easy. The same goes for romantic relationships: Don't get your belly in a rash about anything.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Be gentle with family discussions and domestic matters today, especially exchanges with parents. People feel they "know what's good for you" today. (Ouch.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You're tempted to do anything to win an argument today. Don't take the bait. Although you're very persuasive right now, why act like a steamroller with others?

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You're very intent about financial matters today. You won't overlook a thing. That's why this is a good day for money deals and major purchases.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You feel very intensely about something today. Even though you like to appear breezy and casual about life, today something really hooks you. (Easy does it.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a good day to research anything. If you're looking for something, you will find it. You're relentless about going after answers and solutions.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): A friend might try to convince you of something, or vice versa, today. You might want to ask yourself if it's really that important. (At the end of the game, the King and the Pawn go back in the same box.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Be careful today during discussions with VIPs (including the police). Feelings might run high. This is not a good day to try to prove something to someone.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — by Dave Green

			2	8				
	8	3		6		4	5	
	1	7			5	2	8	
		8						4
5	9			3			1	2
7						5		
	6	4	7			8	2	
	2	5		4		3	6	
				2	3			

Difficulty Level ★

3/12

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

6	3	8	4	9	1	7	5	2
7	1	9	5	6	2	4	3	8
5	4	2	7	8	3	9	1	6
9	7	3	6	2	5	1	8	4
2	8	5	1	4	9	3	6	7
4	6	1	8	3	7	2	9	5
8	2	7	9	1	6	5	4	3
3	9	6	2	5	4	8	7	1
1	5	4	3	7	8	6	2	9

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

3/11

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FROM BOOK TO FILM

Graphic novel gets graphic screen treatment

By Dexter R. Matilla
Contributor

FILM ADAPTATIONS OF COMIC BOOKS (or graphic novels, as they are now more popularly called) seem to be the growing trend nowadays. But while some have been nothing more but disappointments, there are those that transcend the way movies are made. They become instant classics, as some would say, that have the ability to maintain the audience's attention right off the opening scene.

Frank Miller's "300" is one such exception from run-of-the-mill adaptations of graphic novels. Based on the story of the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BC, the movie follows King Leonidas (Gerard Butler) and his 300 Spartans in their battle against Persian king Xerxes (Rodrigo Santoro) and his army of a hundred nations.

The series of events is triggered after Leonidas refuses to submit to Xerxes' whims and, despite the advice of the Ephors, proceeds to march his army.

Director Zack Snyder, who worked on "Dawn of the Dead," said a huge factor in choosing the film's visual tone involved asking the artists to make the illustrations "look like a painting."

The heavy use of blue screen made it easier to do just that and literally translate the look and feel of the comic book into the film. Visual-effects art director Grant Freckelton, whose style guides were used for the film, said he had to create still concepts based on frames from the book to effectively bring Miller's and colorist Lynn Varley's visual style to life.

It is important to note that "300" isn't merely a magnum opus that relies on its imagery for lack of depth and story. Unlike "The Matrix," which considerably lost steam due perhaps to the uneven distribution of lengthy dialogue in one film and the barrage of action sequences in another, the use of light conversational and sometimes sarcastic language in "300" helped balance the gore by showing a smart and funny side to the Leonidas character.

It may have helped that Butler was fit for the role, whether delivering deadpan humor or whether rousing his army by bellowing lines that thankfully didn't come out corny.

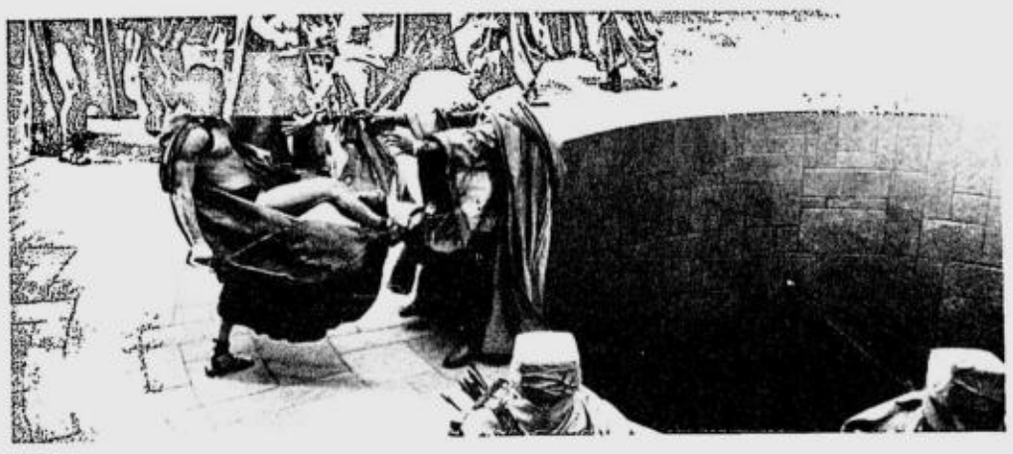
One particular interesting subplot not found in the book that's worth mentioning is Leonidas' wife Queen Gorgo's (Lena Headey) attempt to encourage the elders to send more soldiers to aid the king and his army. Snyder's decision to add the subplot served as a necessary breather from all the action in the film.

With an equal serving of well-thought script and meticulous visuals, Snyder and the producers of "300" may have studied and learned from the mistakes committed by previous comic book-inspired movies and did everything right with this film.

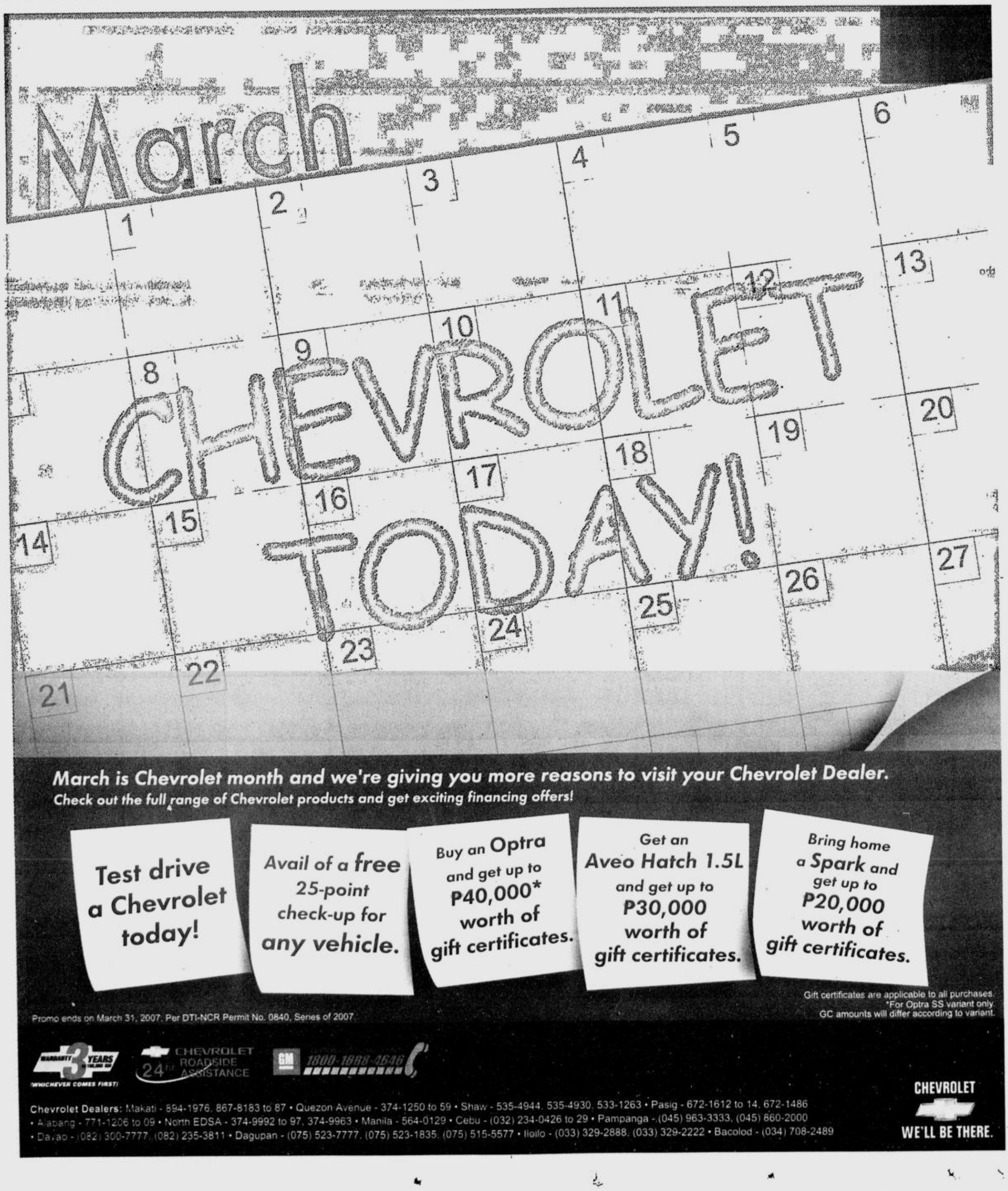
While Neo and "The Matrix" gave us a peek into the limitless possibilities that movies are capable of eight years ago, Leonidas and "300" just reset the standards by kicking the door wide open.

E-mail the author at dxmatilla@yahoo.com

XERXES offers Leonidas wealth and power in exchange for the Spartans surrender.



LEONIDAS kicks Xerxes' messenger, setting off the chain of events.



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Piolo has eyes set on int'l stardom

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PROMO PERIOD: FROM FEB 26 TO MARCH 26 PERMIT NO. 0621 SERIES OF 2007
BELINDA BRIGHT Model/ Actress

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

ACTOR PIOLO PASCUAL considers movie-watching his ultimate indulgence.

"I'm really boring," he confesses. "That's my only hobby."

In spite of his celebrity, Piolo insists on going to the movie house, so he can watch on the big screen.

He often goes to the cinema that's in the same mall as the church he attends, but when he wants a little peace and pampering, he opts for a certain upscale theater. "When I go there, I feel as if I own the entire place," he says.

How does he dodge intrepid fans? "I go in the afternoon, when there are only a few people."

Dream movie

Piolo talks enthusiastically about the movies he has seen recently—all foreign—starting with "The Holiday."

"I liked it," he says, "[though] it made me miss Los Angeles (where he lived for a while during his college years)."

He gives "Babel" a two-thumbs-up. "It was really good."

Mel Gibson's "Apocalypto" was a disappointment for him. "The buildup was good, but it took a nosedive towards the end. The ending was lame."

Piolo looks up to Gibson as filmmaker, though. "There were glimpses of 'The Passion of the Christ' in 'Apocalypto'—specifically, the aerial and top shots. Cinematically, technically, execution-wise, it was impressive. One thing about Mel Gibson, he wants everything in his film to look as real as possible. I'm also like that," he says. "I want to be involved in films like 'Babel' and 'Apocalypto.'"

He says his dream movie is now within reach.

Co-prod

"It's a long-delayed international film called 'Wrinkles.' It will finally push through," he reports.

At one point, 1950s LVN stars Rosa Rosal and Lilia Dizon were also attached to the project, which revolves around a beauty pageant for senior citizens.

Star Cinema, Piolo's home studio, is co-producing it with Hollywood-based Filipino-American filmmaker Romeo Joven, he relates. "I told my friend Romeo that I could do it only if Star Cinema is involved. I don't want any trouble. Star won't lend me to Romeo, unless it's a co-producer."

It's a dream come true, Piolo enthuses.

"But it's not just about being noticed by Hollywood; it's about being finally allowed to do something for the international market," he clarifies.

Challenging

As bonus, the role of an Am-Boy is "different and challenging," he says. "It requires me to speak English not only fluently but with an American accent. It's quite a departure ... I'm so Pinoy, but the character is born and raised in the US."

He's looking forward to the change of pace.

"I can't get it out of my mind. That's where the excitement comes from. To be able to do something out of the box. Something far from your real character. I'm all for that," he points out.

Before he makes the big leap to Hollywood, he is shuttling between two ABS-CBN projects: the soap opera tentatively titled "Walang Kapalit" with Claudine Barretto and the movie with the working title "I Finally Found Someone," with Regine Velasquez.

Also in the works is a movie with Angel Locsin, a prized talent of rival network GMA 7, to be co-produced by Regal and Star Cinema.

Nasty rumors

He also dreams of working with Sharon Cuneta. "I'm a fan," he admits. In the meantime, he is teaming up with fellow Bench man Sam Milby for the tour and repeat of their Valentine concert "Heartthrobs."

"We had a show in Pampanga and there's a repeat in Aliw Theater on March 17," he says.

As for nasty rumors (including the one that links him with Sam), Piolo is unperturbed.

"I've learned how to shrug off [gossip] and pray for the [rumor-mongers]. Maybe they just don't know any better," he says.

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Rock Baby Rock	Kala	ROCKBABY
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Macho Gwapito	Protein Shake	MACHOGWAPITO

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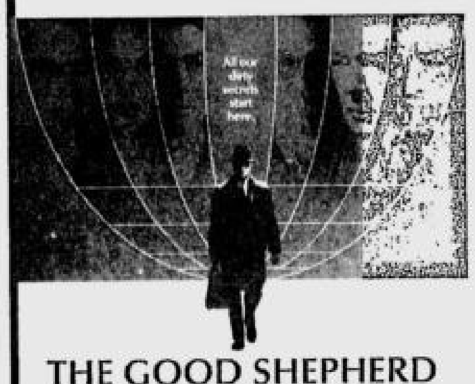

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1:00PM Admission Fee- P200/ P250
T-REX IN 3D
3:30PM 5:00PM 6:30PM
Admission Fee- P200
1 PRIMEVAL
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 THE HITCHER
4 DEAD PEOPLE 2
5 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
6 GHOST RIDER
PREMIERE CINEMA
YOU GOT ME
CENTERSTAGE
300
THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
300
CINEMA 2
PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 300
2 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
3 NUMBER 23
4 GHOST RIDER
5 THE HITCHER
6 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
7 DEAD PEOPLE 2
8 YOU GOT ME
9 PRIMEVAL
10 THE PROMISE
11 300
12 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 300
2 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
3 300
4 RESERVED
5 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
6 300
7 GHOST RIDER
8 PRIMEVAL
9 MUSIC AND LYRICS
10 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
11 YOU GOT ME
12 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 THE PROMISE
4 GHOST RIDER
5 PRIMEVAL
6 THE HITCHER
7 300
8 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
9 YOU GOT ME
10 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
11 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
12 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 300
2 GHOST RIDER
3 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
4 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
5 YOU GOT ME
6 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
7 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
8 DEAD PEOPLE 2
9 THE HITCHER
10 PRIMEVAL

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 300
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
4 THE HITCHER
5 GHOST RIDER
6 YOU GOT ME

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 300
2 THE HITCHER
3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
4 300
5 YOU GOT ME
6 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
7 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
8 GHOST RIDER
9 PRIMEVAL

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 300
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 THE HITCHER

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 300
2 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
3 THE HITCHER
4 GHOST RIDER
5 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
6 300
7 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS
8 PRIMEVAL
9 YOU GOT ME
10 DEAD PEOPLE 2
11 EPIC MOVIE
12 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 300
2 YOU GOT ME
3 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
4 FLUSHED AWAY

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 300
2 FLUSHED AWAY
3 PRIMEVAL
4 YOU GOT ME

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 300
3 YOU GOT ME
4 THE HITCHER

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SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868
1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 THE HITCHER
3 GHOST RIDER
4 PRIMEVAL
5 300
6 YOU GOT ME
7 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
8 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 300
2 GHOST RIDER
3 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
4 PRIMEVAL
5 YOU GOT ME
6 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 EPIC MOVIE
2 FLUSHED AWAY
3 YOU GOT ME
4 PRIMEVAL

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 THE FOUNTAIN
2 GHOST RIDER
3 YOU GOT ME
4 PRIMEVAL

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637081-85
1 GHOST RIDER
2 300
3 THE PROMISE
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
6 YOU GOT ME

SM CIY LIPA (043) 756-7925
1 NUMBER 23
2 PRIMEVAL
3 YOU GOT ME
4 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 YOU GOT ME
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
4 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 YOU GOT ME
2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
3 THE FOUNTAIN
4 300

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 THE HITCHER
2 300
3 PRIMEVAL
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 300

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 300
2 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS
3 PRIMEVAL
4 YOU GOT ME
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 300
2 FLUSHED AWAY
3 YOU GOT ME
4 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 MUSIC AND LYRICS
2 RESERVED
3 300
4 YOU GOT ME
5 GHOST RIDER
6 PRIMEVAL
7 RESERVED
8 FLUSHED AWAY

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 GHOST RIDER
2 300
3 THE HITCHER
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
5 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS
6 THE RETURN
7 YOU GOT ME
8 PRIMEVAL

SM BACOLOD NOW OPEN
1 YOU GOT ME
2 300
3 PRIMEVAL
4 THE MESENGER

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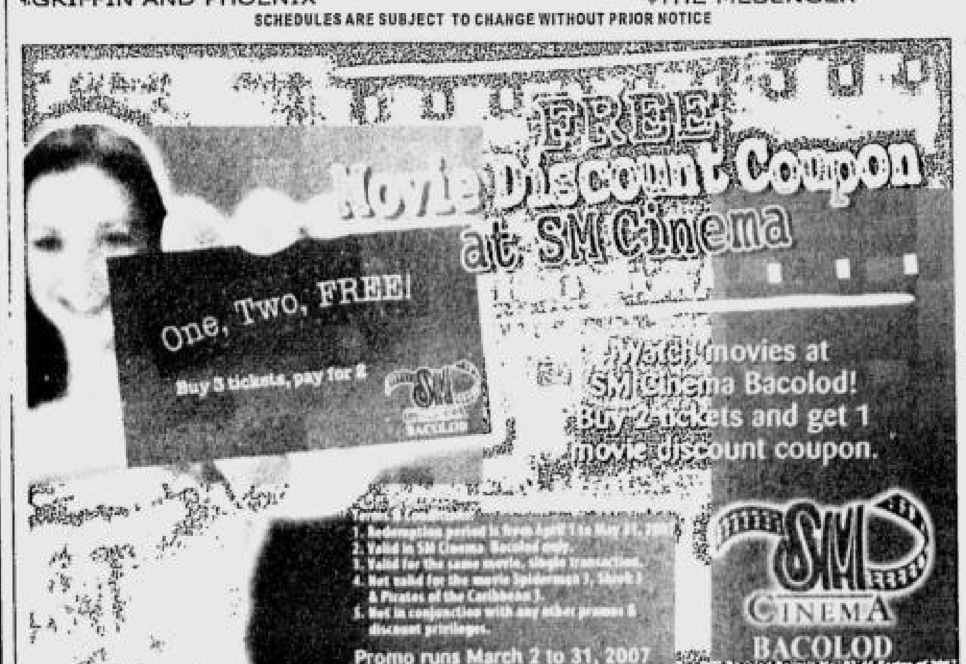

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SHANGRI-LA CINEPLEX
6th floor Shangri-la Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
1 (DOLBY) 300
2 (DOLBY) PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 (DOLBY) MUSIC & LYRICS
4 (DOLBY) THE GOOD SHEPHERD
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) THE HITCHER
FLUSHED AWAY

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 300
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 300
4 (DOLBY) PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
5 RESRVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504205, 5433994
1 YOU GOT ME
2 DEAD PEOPLE-2
3 300
4 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

THEATRES (Pacific Mall Cebu)
1 GHOST RIDER
2 YOU GOT ME
3 NUMBER 23

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
☆ YOU GOT ME
☆ GHOST RIDER
☆ RESRVED
☆ RESRVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 THE HITCHER
2 PRIMEVAL
3 300
4 300
5 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
6 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
7 GHOST RIDER
8 DEAD PEOPLE-2
9 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
10 YOU GOT ME

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341937
1 (DOLBY) YOU GOT ME
2 (DOLBY) 300
3 (DOLBY) PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
1 (DOLBY) PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 300
3 YOU GOT ME
4 DEAD PEOPLE-2
5 GHOST RIDER

THE MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 PRIMEVAL
2 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
3 NUMBER 23
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA (Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 YOU GOT ME
2 THE HITCHER
3 EPIC MOVIE

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 300
2 THE FOUNTAIN

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 300
2 YOU GOT ME
3 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
4 PRIMEVAL

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 GHOST RIDER
2 YOU GOT ME

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 (DOLBY) 300
3 (DOLBY) THE HITCHER
4 (DOLBY) THE GOOD SHEPHERD

CINEMA 2000 Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 YOU GOT ME
3 300
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6773
1 APOCALYPTO
2 YOU GOT ME
3 GHOST RIDER

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 YOU GOT ME
2 HANNIVAL RISING
3 GHOST RIDER
4 THE FOUNTAIN

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 YOU GOT ME

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 GHOST RIDER
2 YOU GOT ME

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 YOU GOT ME
2 PRIMEVAL

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 DEAD PEOPLE-2
2 BED TIME
3 HULING BERHEN SA LUPA
4 NUMBER 23

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 300
2 PEEP SHOW
3 YOU GOT ME
4 SUGAT WALANG PAGHILUM
5 PURSUIT OF HAPYNESS

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0750
1 THE FOUNTAIN
2 NUMBER 23
3 PRIMEVAL
4 YOU GOT ME

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 TROIKA
2 NUMBER 23

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G2

Promising prem[ise]

"YOU GOT ME!," STAR CINEMA'S LATEST ROmantic-comedy, opts for a "love triangle" format in a rather unusual setting—a police precinct!

Yes, leads Toni Gonzaga and Sam Milby both portray cops, and Toni's dad (played by Johnny Delgado) is a senior police officer.

As for third lead Zanjoe Marudo, he is cast as a charming and street-smart rogue who falls for Toni like a ton of hollow blocks, and causes Sam's more timid character some sleepless nights.

All in all, a "different" and therefore promising project. It's always cause for celebration when film people come up with something relatively fresh!

Unfortunately, the promising premise is compromised by unreal execution, and its leads' limitations. For starters, the movie's cop situation quickly opts for a fantasy instead of realistic treatment.

We've seen scores of policewomen, but Toni's character's look in the movie bears no resemblance to any of them. She's lithe, walks like a model, sometimes wears her hair long and flowing as though she's shooting a shampoo commercial, and is made up to an inch of her life. *This* is a policewoman?!

With the lead characters looking and acting so unreal, genuine audience empathy and involvement fly out of the window. As a result, we're reduced to merely gawking at the unreal goings-on, and wondering how otherwise proficient movie production people could get things so wrong.

Yes, we know it's all for the "*kilig* factor" that local romantic-comedies must have to tickle movie fans' fancy. But we've viewed some local rom-coms that weren't as fantasticating as this, so the "rule" isn't as rigid as all that.

VIEWFINDE[R]

Nestor U. Tor[res]

As for Sam Milby, h[...] continuing inability t[...] been some "improv[...] enough, and we mus[t...] made to suffer throug[h...] cation." "Educate" hin[...]

In addition, Milby's [...] real, because he's a [...] Imagine encounterin[g...] patently fanciful char[...] Wake up, everybody, a[...]

Zanjoe's character [...] all to the good. But h[...] the production's fanta[...] as too roguishly cute f[...]

As for his charact[...] aside too quickly and [...] pal leads Toni and San[...] at the final fade.

To its credit, the oth[...] ing production scores [...] partment, with some [...] flight and chase scen[...] an agreeable degree.

Right after, howev[...]

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PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	12:40, 3:10, 5:50, 8:30, 11:00	G
300	12:15, 2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:10	R-13
THE HITCHER	1:55, 4:10, 6:25, 8:40, 10:55	R-13
THE GOOD SHEPHERD	1:30, 4:50, 8:10, 11:20	R-13

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GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA

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CINEMA 1 — 300 — 10:30, 1:20, 4:10, 7:00, 9:50 — R-13
CINEMA 2 — THE HITCHER — 11:40, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 8:25, 10:35 — R-13
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PROMENADE GREENHILLS
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NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 — THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS — 11:15, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00 — PG-13
CINEMA 4 — A GOOD SHEPHERD — 11:50, 3:20, 6:45, 10:10 — R-13
CINEMA 5 — 300 — 11:10, 2:00, 4:50, 7:40, 10:30 — R-13

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MUSIC MUSEUM

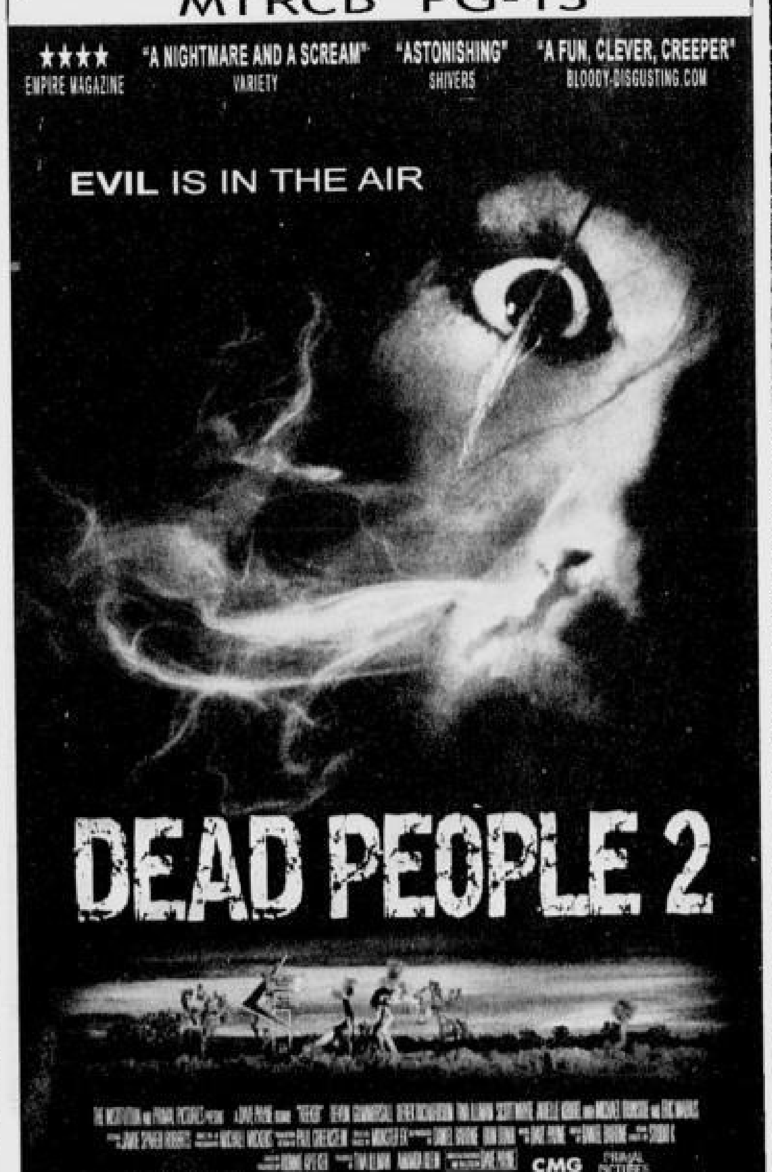
March 16 & 23, 2007	SITTI ... IN LOVE	8:30 PM
March 30, 2007	[illegible]	8:30 PM
May 25, 2007	CHRISTIAN BAUTISTA	8:00 PM

TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS

EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00 PM
March 15, 22, 29, 2007	RAYMUND LAUCHENGCO	8:30 PM

FOR INQUIRIES PLS. CALL 722-4532 LOC 116

NOW SHOWING!
MTRCB PG-13



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continue to protest our being
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off-camera, please.
character here is similarly un-
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such an incongruous and
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s more grittily real, and that's
also eventually falls victim to
sticating air, and comes across
r comfort.
r's denouement, he's pushed
conveniently to enable princi-
to end up in each other's arms

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solid points in the action de-
xciting and rather complicated
s raising its excitement level to

r, the saggy, sappy romantic el-

ement takes over again, and we're miffed and frustrated once more.

'TMNT'

Get ready for the return of The Mutant Ninja Turtles as Solar Entertainment brings them back in "TMNT," the first all-CGI-animated film. This time around, they come together again to fight an army of monsters hell-bent on taking over the entire planet.

'Really Big Things'

Beginning March 22 at 8 p.m., Discovery Channel telecasts "Really Big Things," a new series that profiles the inner workings of massive man-made wonders that keep our world moving. The show is hosted by Matt Rogers, one of the finalists of Season 3 of "American Idol."

Taking viewers across the globe, "Really Big Things" zeroes in on massive machinery of all kinds—from the world's largest windmill turbine in Germany to the largest telescope in Arizona, USA.

Feedback

A reader on our Feb. 24 piece on top-rating TV shows: "Your column made me curious: How are these ratings determined? And, how reliable are they? I have been a televiewer ever since I can remember, but I have never been asked what programs I prefer to watch. I have also not met anybody who has been part of any such survey.

"I am perplexed because neither I nor my family and friends watch those so-called highly rated Channel 7 shows.

"Are television units on board air-con buses part of the ratings? I've noticed that all TV sets on buses going to and from south of Metro Manila are tuned in exclusively to Channel 7. I was told (I don't know if it's true) that those sets are supplied by GMA 7. What's the lowdown on this?

"Thank you for your very interesting articles on a lot of subjects."

Josh Groban

Warner Music Philippines has worked out a collaboration with ABS-CBN's Bantay 163 by donating the use of the single and video of Josh Groban's "You are loved (Don't give up)," in all promotional platforms. A part of the proceeds from the sales of "Awake," Groban's new album, was donated to the foundation during the formal turnover and album launch last Feb. 16.

'About 1%'

Airing on Channel 2 Saturdays at 10 a.m. is "Something About 1%," a light comedy-drama written by Hyeon Go Won, one of Korea's top-selling romance authors, and starring major stars Kim Jeong Hwa and Kang Dong Won. The new series is also telecast every Sunday at 10 a.m.

"YOU GOT Me" cast Sam Milby, Toni Gonzaga and Zanjoe Marudo with director Cathy Garcia-Molina (third from left)

Pia Guanio likes . . . From page G4

inspires discussion, like when people don't agree with our top five or top three choices."

Her favorite episode, she says, is the listing of kids' idols—from their favorite singers to their favorite cartoon character to their favorite *telefantasya* hero.

Eye opener

Pia points out that a survey conducted by AC Nielsen Philippines, a research company, showed that 34 percent of the 84 million population of the Philippines are children aged 0 to 14.

To Pia, the episode was an eye opener, showing how young the population thinks and feels by exploring the values and desires that kids today espouse.

"We found out that the favorite pastime of kids is watching TV, and 80 percent of households in the Philippines have television sets," she says. "So I'm sure shows that give information will help our young population a lot."

Pia, who describes herself as an old soul, says she brings her own brand of journalism to the shows that she hosts, be it the show biz talk show "S-Files," "Chika Minute" on "24 Oras," or the variety show "Eat Bulaga!"

News training

"My training is in news and current affairs," she notes. "I had four years of that before I got caught in the entertainment business. I don't think of 'S-Files' as just a gossip show. We are always very careful, and we verify everything before airing the material. We don't air anything that we just heard or read about. That's why I can do news programs [because of the reputation for credibility that I've earned]."

The old soul in Pia is perhaps one reason that she and Vic, who is 30 years her senior, click as a couple.

"I like jazz, big band, the Beatles," she says. "I have interests that are not of my generation.

"Because of my personality, I find that I need a man who has had a head start. I demand a lot—conversation, wisdom, street smarts. Vic is good in terms of the way [the relationship] works. He also makes me laugh when I'm sad—without fail. He has a knack for delivering the most ridiculous line with a straight face."

Face to face

It's not difficult to associate the Pia Guanio on TV reporting entertainment news, from Pia Guanio who is a thinking woman.

"I sometimes do my own stories for 'Chika Minute,'" she says. "And I have a hand in script adjustments."

"S-Files," she says, gives her a chance to come face-to-face with the show biz people that she reports about on a daily basis.

Contrary to what most people think, on-cam work is not just about reading from a script or being a talking head, she insists.

"It's a totally different experience," says Pia. "You have to have your wits about you, think on your feet ... and at the same time speak in perfect Filipino."

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 300 MTRCB R-13 1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS MTRCB GP 1:55, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00
3 MUSIC & LYRICS MTRCB PG-13 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
4 THE GOOD SHEPHERD MTRCB R-13 12:05, 3:20, 6:40, 10:00
PREMIERE THEATRE THE HITCHER MTRCB R-13 1:00, 7:45 FLUSHED AWAY MTRCB GP 3:15, 5:30
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THE GOOD SHEPHERD R13 12:45,4:00,7:15,10:30	300 R13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30	300 R13 1:40,4:10,6:40,9:10
PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS G 2:45,5:15,7:45,10:15	FLUSHED AWAY G 2:00,4:00 HITCHER R13 6:00,8:00	300 R13 2:20,4:50,7:20,9:50

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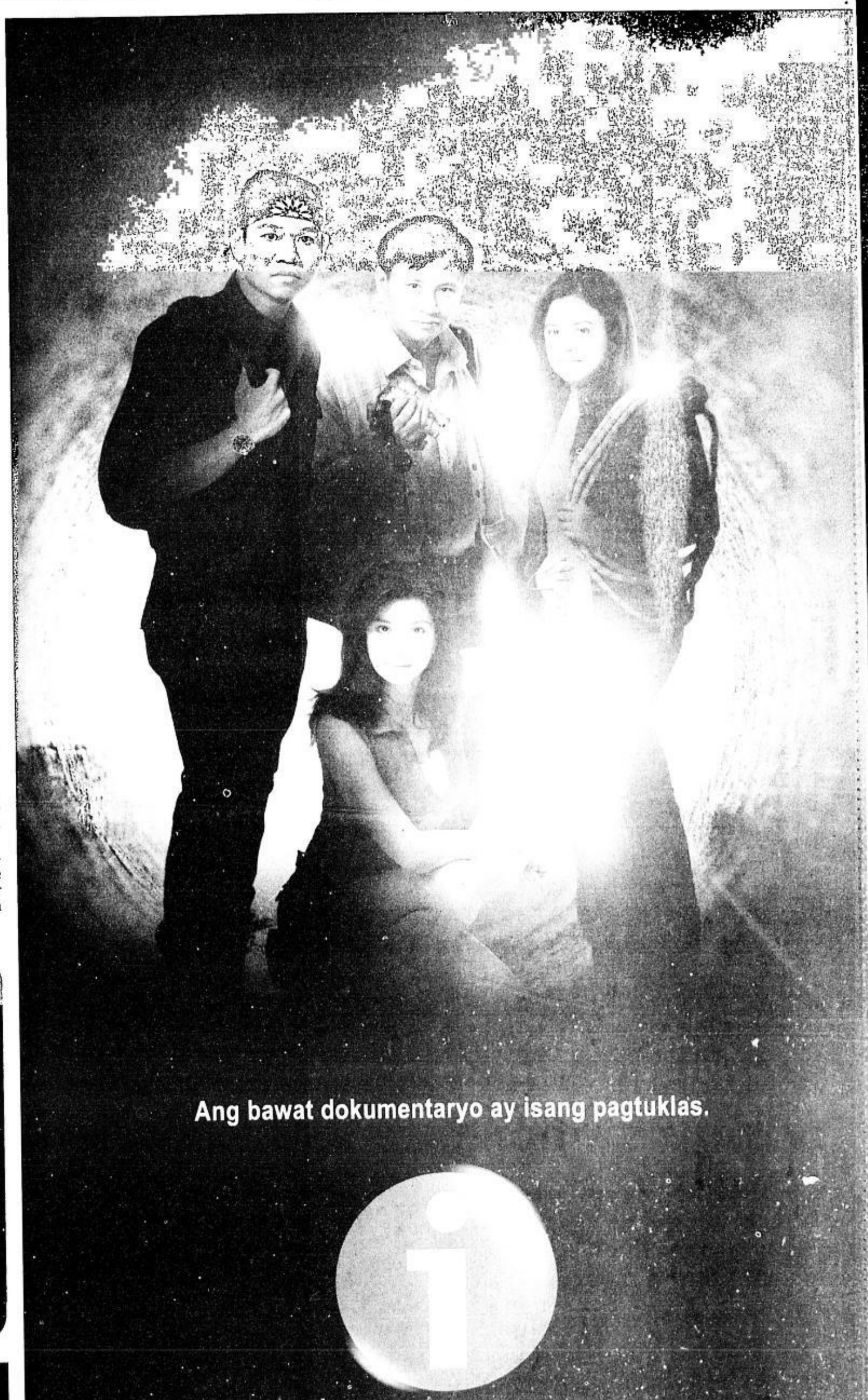

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Pia Guanio talks a lot ... but not about Vic Sotto

By Nini Valera

PIA GUANIO LIKES TO TALK about anything and everything, except, perhaps, her relationship with Vic Sotto.

Every Sunday, she dishes out information about the best buys, best hideaways, best eats, sexiest 40-year-old actors, most sensational show biz stories—just about anything—in the lifestyle show "Pinaka," aired on QTV 11, which lists the top 10 of nearly everything.

"I like the show in the sense that it empowers the viewers with information and entertains them at the same time," says Pia, 28, of "Pinaka." "People like it because it's fast-paced and entertaining. It also

PIA/G2

PIA GUANIO

Did You Know...

Name it

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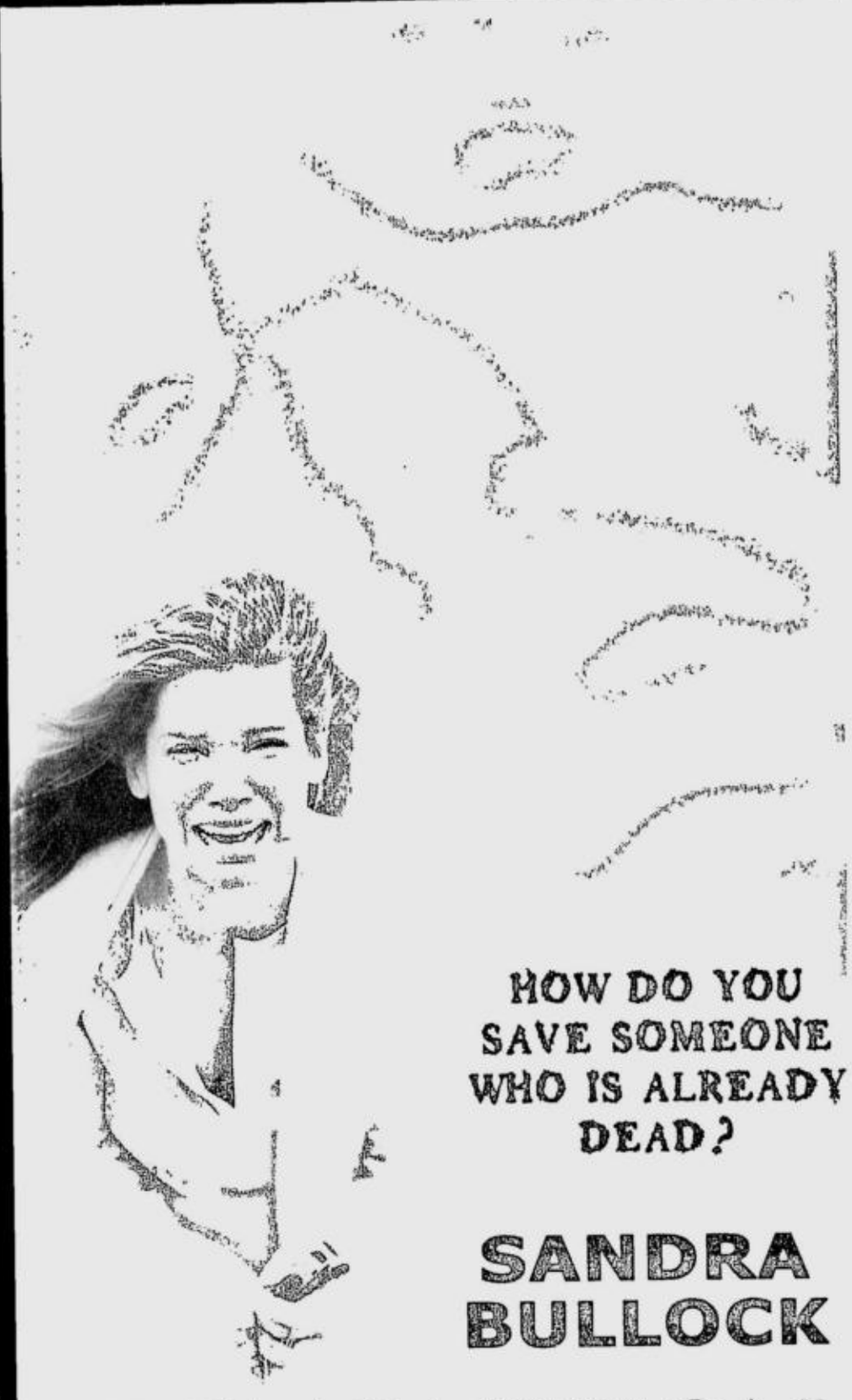
OPENS MARCH 21



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YOU GOT ME 12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30	MUSIC & LYRICS 5:25 / 9:45	IT'S A BOY GIRL THING 1:05 / 3:15 / 7:35

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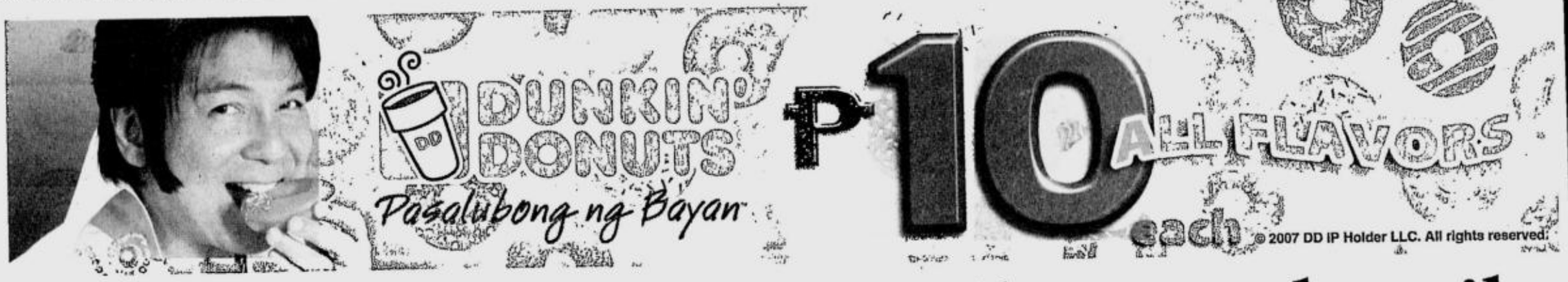

David & Mary bow out, happily

By Ruth L. Navarra

DAVID AND MARY DIDN'T need allies to get through the challenges—but they needed better navigational skills. Getting lost at the airport had resulted in a costly delay in reaching their roadblock. Thus, they became the third team eliminated from "The Amazing Race All-Stars"

Earlier, in Season 10, their wide-eyed wonder at the new places they stumbled into and their rapport with the locals made David and Mary the favorites. They became so popular, that Rosie O'Donnell gave them a house and car after the race.

"Rosie is our angel. Our lives have changed because we don't have to pay for a car now. Our kids can travel," says Mary. So when they were asked to race again for the all-star season, the coal miners had one apprehension.

"Physically, we had recovered from Season 10. But as parents, we had a hard time leaving our children for the second time," says David.

What's the difference between Season 10 and "All-Stars"?

Mary: The first time we raced, everything was fresh—everything was a wonder. In "All-stars" we already knew the people we were up against and they knew us. We

DAVID/ H2

DAVID and Mary, above, were proven short on navigational skills.

Now they are rooting for 'the ultimate reality TV couple' in their eyes– Rob and Amber

Spidey, Pirates TV sneaks

CHEER FACTOR

LOS ANGELES—AN EXCLUSIVE PREview of "Spider-Man 3" aired during NBC's "Heroes" this week. A commercial also invited Spidey fans to catch more than seven minutes of never-before-seen film footage on the NBC Web site.

The trailer for "Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End" makes its worldwide debut during the "Dancing with the Stars" season premiere on March 19—and simultaneously on popular shows in 61 other countries.

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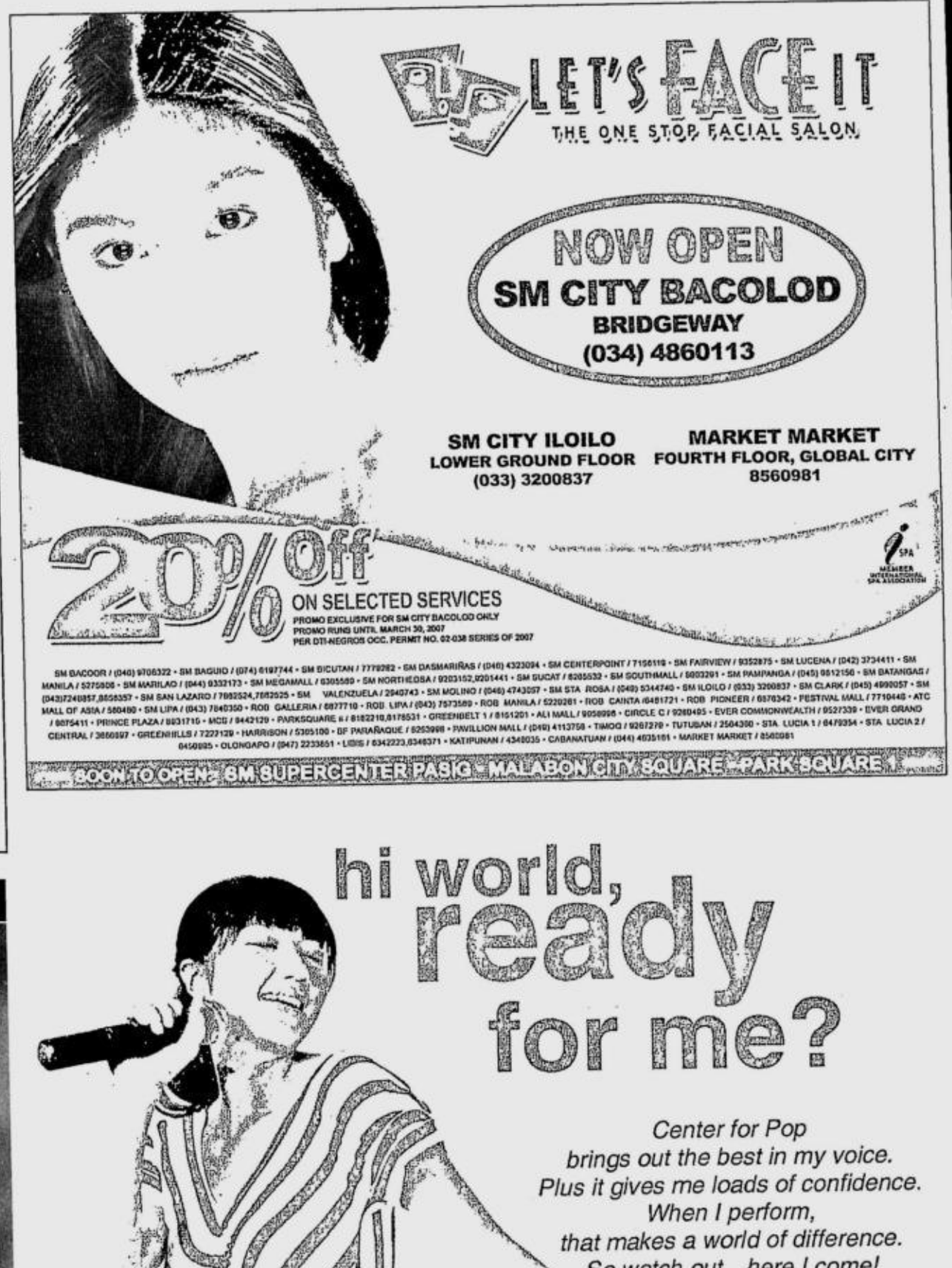

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12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

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7 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

8 indieSine: ROME and JULIET
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

9 THE PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

10 YOU GOT ME
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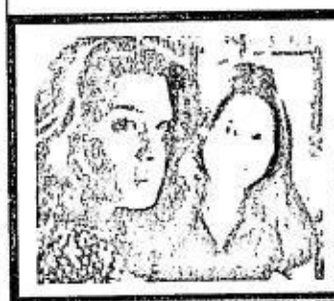

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Rome and Juliet

This tale follows the romantic journey of two straight women caught in a web of forbidden love. Juliet, a conservative pre-school teacher hires Rome, a liberated businesswoman to be her wedding planner. As they go through the preparations, the two develop a relationship that the groom to be soon finds out.

ERMITA

1 300
12:35 3:00 5:25 7:45 10:00

2 IT's A BOY GIRL THING 12:05 2:00 3:55
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METRO EAST

1 THE NUMBER 23 12:50 2:50
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1 300
2 YOU GOT ME
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PIONEER

1 A GOOD SHEPHERD
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3 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
1:15 3:45 6:15 8:40

4 THE HITCHER
12:25 2:30 4:35 6:40 8:40

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5 YOU GOT ME

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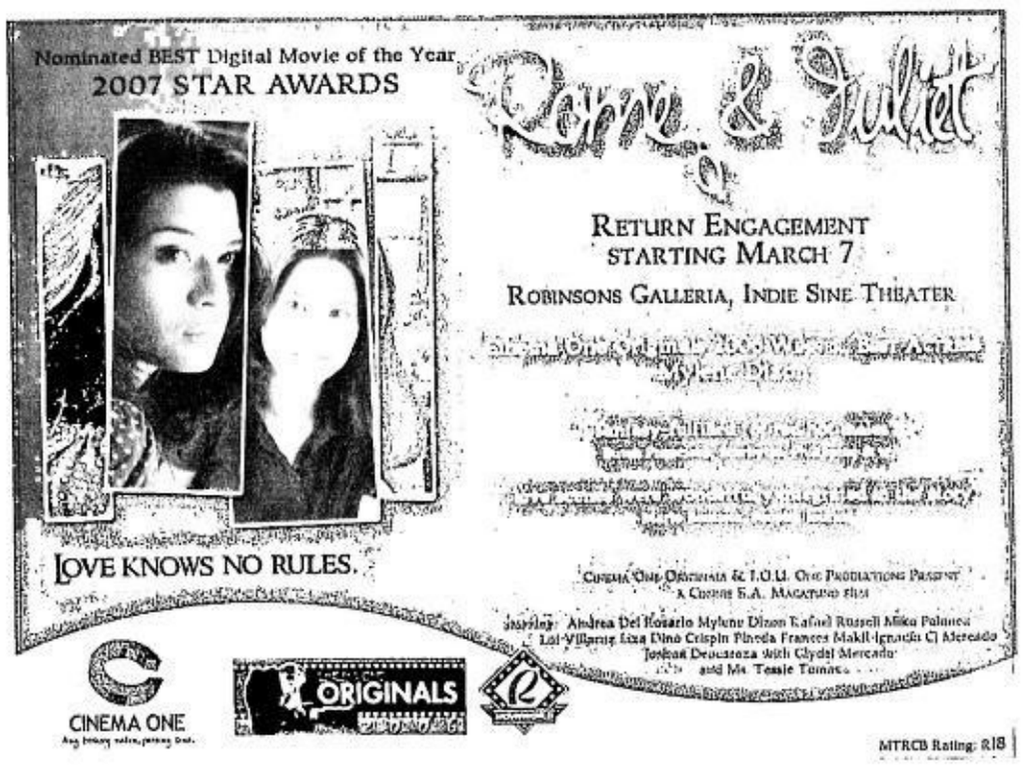
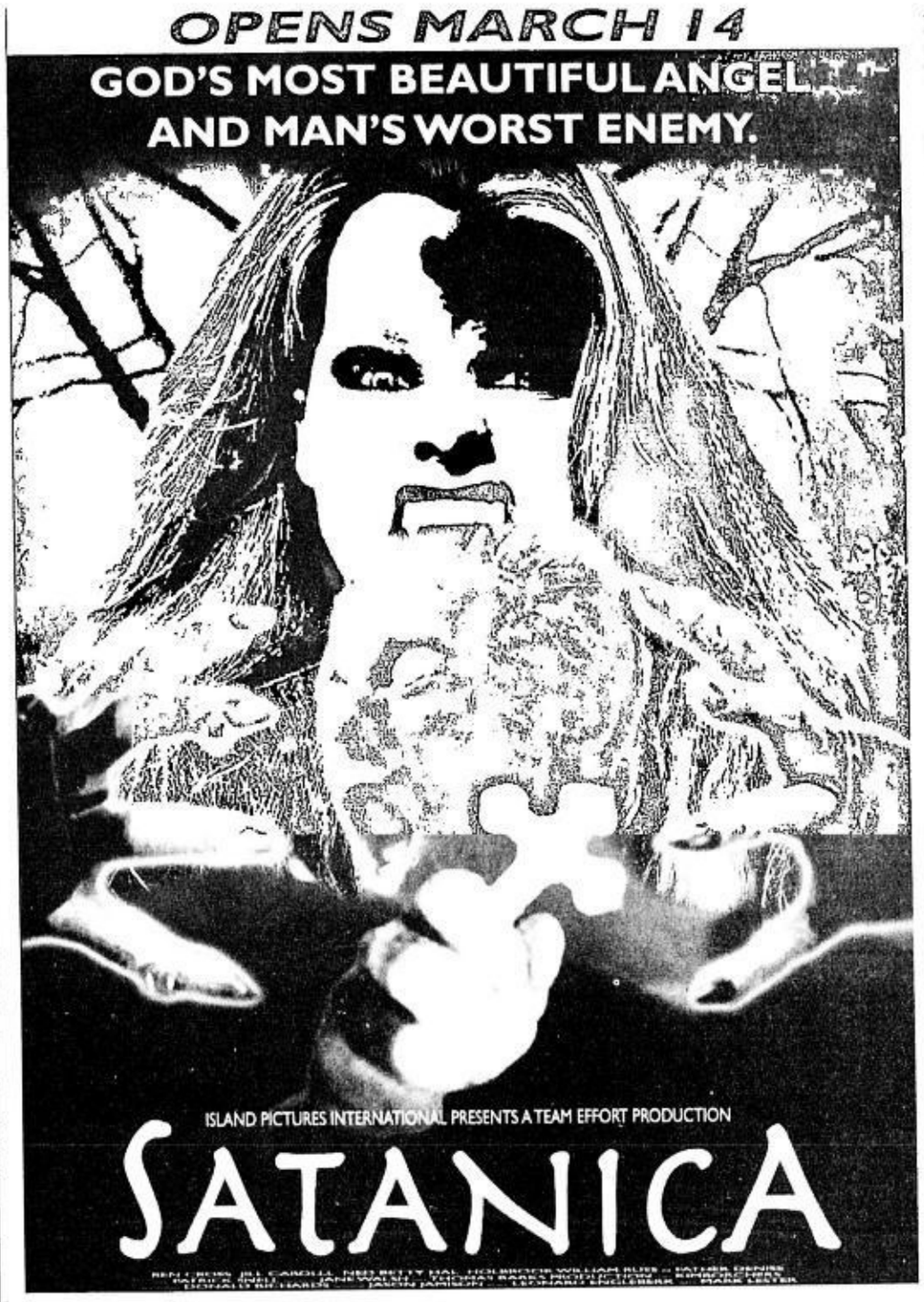
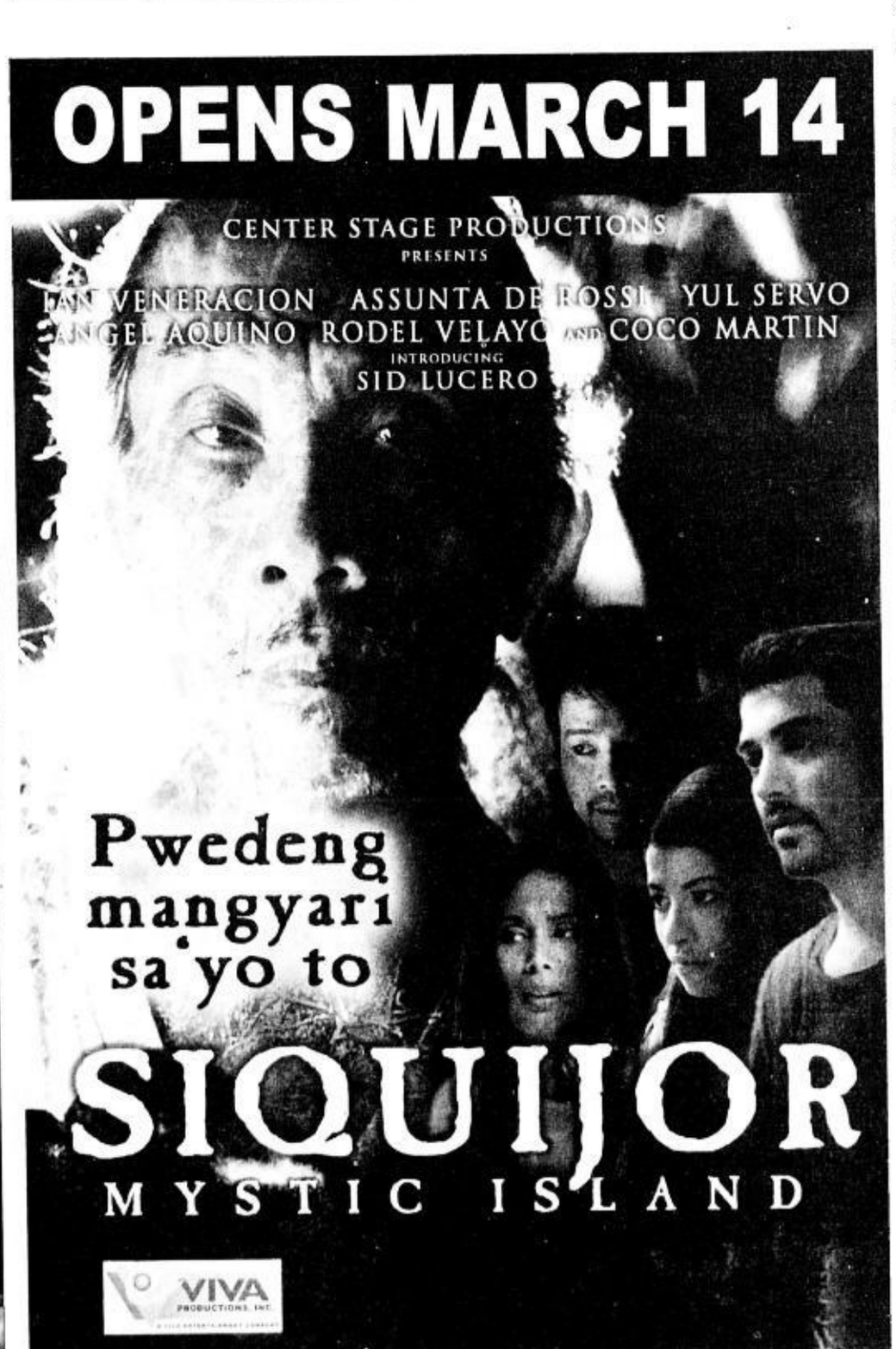
5 TROIKA
6 FLUSHED AWAY







David & M

all knew how everybody played
David: It's like you were give
ond chance and you knew wh
with it.

Is there anything you'd chang way you played this one?
Mary: I would've still gotter and Mirna from the mud but I w give them any help with the clu

If you could've yielded anyor would it be and why?
David: Drew and Kevin, if th still around. It upset me that Dr my bag out of the overhead c ment in the plane and threw i ground.
Mary: Charla and Mirna. I w beat them. I didn't like the thi stood for. I didn't like the w treated the other teams, the lo the cab drivers. They were very

Who are you rooting for now?
Mary: Honest to goodness, Rob and Amber to win. They ar timate reality TV couple. If n I'd like the beauty queens to wi

THE COMPANY

Brazilian season

"DESTINATION: BOSSA," THE CompanY's latest album released under Viva Records, explores the varied rhythms, textures and moods of Brazilian music.

Featured songs include the Brazilian classic "Goodbye Sadness (Tristeza)," James Taylor's "Your Smiling Face," Voyage's French disco classic "Souvenirs," The Police's "Every Little Thing (He) Does Is Magic," Seals and Crofts 70's hit "Summer Breeze" and Donna Summer's "Whispering Waves."

The CompanY is Annie Quintos, Moy Ortiz, Cecile Bautista, Sweet Plantado and Jay Marquez.

SPIN CITY

Album launch

Pinoy reggae band Brownman Revival will launch their second album "Ayos Din" tomorrow, 10:30 p.m. at Xaymaca Bar, Timog Avenue, Quezon City.

Buyers of the group's latest album may take part in the musical event.

The album, bannered by the Rico J. Puno original "Sorry Na, Pwede Ba," is available on CDs under Sony BMG Music Entertainment.

Worldwide hit

"Truly Madly Deeply," Cascada's latest single from her album "Everytime We Touch," has sold over one million copies worldwide.

The songs on the album's deluxe edition are "How Do You Do," "Another You," "Ready for Love," "Miracle," "Kids in America," "Can't Stop the Train," "Wouldn't It Be Good," "Bad Boy," "Neverending Dream," "Love Again" and "One More Night."

Bossa nova

Pavi, the latest Alpha Music artist catering to the bossa nova genre, has just released her debut album titled "Bossa Sessions."

The album is a compilation of famous love songs spanning decades done the bossa nova way.

Among the songs in the album are "Night and Day," "I Can't Tell You Why," "Call Me," "The Wind Beneath My Wings" and "The Look of Love."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

lary bow out, happily

From page H1

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David: Just about everybody in the race deserves to win.

Were you really paranoid about the Rob and Amber tandem?

Mary: We're fans of all the teams—The Guidos, they're the fathers of the race. You can't have the "All-Stars" without the Cha Cha Chas. Uchenna and Joyce had already won the million dollars. Joyce, she shaved her head, they were awesome.

What's next for the two of you?

David: I still want to be a "Survivor"

Mary: There are so many things I did not do as a child. But my kids, they took their first plane ride when they were only 6, 7 and 10. There's a whole world out there that mommy has not seen.

David: Basically, that's what we're all about. I'm a coal miner; it's just what I want. I would just love to take the kids with me and travel.

Mary: I would love to go to the Philippines. Our kids' pediatrician is from there.

The "Amazing Race All-Stars" airs every Monday, 9 p.m. on AXN.

KENTUCKY couple David, 32, and Mary, 31, received a house and car from Rosie O'Donnell after the 10th "Race."

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SLEEPING CONCERT
People take part in a sleeping concert in Madrid on Friday, the first of its kind in Spain. The concert has Japanese pianist Mine Kawakami playing music with the intention of creating an atmosphere so relaxing, that the spectators fall asleep. AFP

Oh, the choices they make

"BRING ME TO LIFE," THE POP-rock song by Evanescence, failed to bring to life Rich Asuncion's chances of remaining among the top six survivors of "Starstruck The Next Level," the reality talent search aired over GMA 7.

Asuncion, a former Miss Tagbilaran, was booted out of the competition a few weeks ago, but regained a survivor spot.

"*Sumablay* (I buckled)," Asuncion told INQUIRER Entertainment, referring to her performance. "I thought rock was my genre. Now, I realize that I can't do all the rock songs, like this one."

On that show, Sunday before last, Prince Stefan also blew his performance of the oldie "The Way You Look Tonight," singing the song off-key in parts. "I got distracted," Stefan said. "I forgot the tune when I reached the bridge."

RUSHES

Stef Prescott, who picked Britney Spears' "I'm Not A Girl, Not Yet A Woman," said choosing a song that one was comfortable with was part of staying in the competition.

Prescott, however, landed in the bottom group that night, along with Aljur Abrenica, Jewel Mische and Prince Stefan. The top four were Kris Bernal, Rich Asuncion, Paulo Avelino and Mart Escudero.

Mische, Bernal and Escudero had chosen to dance. They're not big on singing, anyway. *Nini Valera*

ANTONELLA BARBA

'Exploited' miss

POINT PLEASANT, New Jersey—Be careful who you trust.

That is the advice from Antonella Barba, New Jersey's "American Idol" contestant, a day after being voted off the TV singing competition following two weeks of turbulence over racy photos posted on the Internet.

"These were photos of my personal life that got exploited without my consent," she said during a conference call Friday with reporters from across the country.

Publicists for the top-rated Fox show cut off reporters' questions about the pictures during the conference call. *AP*

Salma pregnant

NEW YORK—Next up for Salma Hayek is a wedding—and a baby carriage.

The 40-year-old actress is engaged to businessman Francois-Henri Pinault and is pregnant with their first child, her spokeswoman, Cari Ross, said Friday in a statement. No further details were provided. *AP*

Kate wins

LONDON—Actress Kate Winslet was awarded substantial libel damages Friday after The British magazine Grazia wrongly stated that she had visited a diet doctor.

The curvy actress, known for her outspoken criticism of excessive dieting, was not at London's High Court for the hearing. But she said in a statement that she was delighted by the outcome.

"I have always been, and shall continue to be, honest when it comes to body/weight issues," she said. "I feel very strongly that 'curves' are natural, womanly and real." *AP*

Oldest bride?

JODHPUR, India—"Is it this old woman who's getting married?" asked Kastury Ghosh, a bridal shop manager in the west Indian city of Jodhpur, as she peered over her glasses at a picture of Elizabeth Hurley.

"She is the oldest bride Jodhpur has ever seen," Ghosh said of the 41-year-old actress.

The residents of Jodhpur were not aware of Elizabeth Hurley's existence until she decided to take over the grand palace on a hill overlooking the city on Wednesday for three days to celebrate her marriage to Indian businessman Arun Nayar.

Indian women are commonly married off in their teens to a man of their parents' choosing. *Reuters*

Boston lead dies

ATKINSON, New Hampshire—Brad Delp, lead singer for the band Boston, was found dead in his home in southern New Hampshire. He was 55.

"There was nothing disrupted in the house. He was a fairly healthy person from what we're able to ascertain," Police Chief Philip Consentino told WMUR-TV, dismissing the possibility of foul play. *AP*

Clinic sues Love

SANTA ANA, California—A drug rehabilitation center sued Courtney Love, claiming the singer has repeatedly refused to pay her $181,000 bill for her stay at the luxury California retreat in late 2005. *AP*

Prison term, maybe

BEVERLY HILLS, California—"Prison Break" actor Lane Garrison, 26, was charged with manslaughter and drunken driving for a crash that killed a 17-year-old boy in his car.

Garrison could face up to six years and eight months in prison if convicted.

The Dallas native, played David "Tweener" Apolskis on the Fox drama series "Prison Break." His character was killed in an episode last year. *AP*

SALMA HAYEK

ELIZABETH Hurley greets an unidentified guest at a party hosted by Indian socialite Parameshwar Godrej in Mumbai. AFP

KATE WINSLET

ANG PAGBABALIK NI YANKUMI!
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Japan's No.1 drama for 2005
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Pagkatapos ng Swak Pak
GMA

WORLD / A20

Chirac bows out, calls on France to shun extremism

BUSINESS / B1

Ayala, FBDC in P8-B Fort Boni project

ACROSS / A13

Bayan Muna member slain in Misamis Oriental

BUSINESS / B1

Gov't debt fell sharply to 64% of GDP in 2006

METRO / A17

Tullahan Bridge closed again this Friday for dry run of rerouting scheme

Good times are back for rich folk in Manila

ON SATURDAY NIGHTS, Metro Manila's urban elite throng to the invitation-only VIP room at Embassy nightclub, where foie gras and a flute of champagne are the de rigueur accompa-

GOOD/ A7

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, March 13, 2007 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 95 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Nursing test retake slated for June 11-12

By Jerome Aning and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE RETAKE OF THE LEAKAGE-MARRED JUNE 2006 licensure exam for nursing graduates who want to work in the United States will be conducted on June 11 and 12, Labor Secretary Arturo Brion said yesterday.

Tests 3 (Medical Surgery Nursing) and 5

NURSING/ A7

It's final: Vilma running for governor of Batangas

By Marlon Ramos and Marlon Alexander Luistro
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LIPA CITY—AS IN PHILIPPINE movies where the heroine battles against all odds, even at the risk of splitting her family, actress-politician Vilma Santos yesterday announced her candidacy for governor of Batangas before a cheering crowd of thousands.

But even before the Lipa City mayor made her announcement, a faction of the ruling Lakas-CMD coalition, to which Santos belongs, bolted from the alliance in support of reelectionist Gov. Armando Sanchez—foreshadowing a bitter election battle in the vote-rich province.

"I am accepting the challenge. I am ready. I will file my candidacy for governorship," Santos said in a speech drowned out by cheers from a crowd of 5,000 at the Lipa City Youth and Cultural Center here.

Santos said she went through a difficult week of prayer and contemplation before she arrived at her decision.

IT'S FINAL/ A8

LIPA CITY Mayor Vilma Santos-Recto is mobbed by supporters shortly after she announced her plan to run for governor of Batangas against incumbent Armand Sanchez and brother-in-law Ricky Recto. Behind is her husband, reelectionist Sen. Ralph Recto.

EDWIN BACASMAS

A FIREMAN sifts through the debris inside the Comelec building in Intramuros, Manila, which was gutted by fire early Sunday morning.

REM ZAMORA

Church urged to name bets

Bro. Mike: Pick 18 candidates and then voters can choose 12

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

BRO. MARIANO "MIKE" VELARDE YESTERDAY URGED LEADERS OF the Catholic Church to help the faithful choose the candidates who deserve to be in the Senate.

Velarde, the influential leader of El Shaddai, a Catholic charismatic group, said bishops and priests could endorse a list of 18 deserving senatorial candidates from which the laity could choose the 12 names they would write on their ballots.

Twelve seats in the 24-member Senate are up for grabs in the May 14 elections.

Velarde said Church leaders need not formally announce their chosen candidates. "They can just whisper their names and [the names] will spread to the people," he said.

He said bishops and priests should not limit their role to issuing general statements about the senatorial and local elections.

"My position is the separation of Church and State does not apply to this process of selecting leaders because this is the time when leaders of the Church should have active participation not just in setting guidelines but also in guiding the flock on who the right candidates are," Velarde told the INQUIRER Saturday night.

He spoke to the INQUIRER as he prepared to address several thousand El Shaddai members who filled his sprawling compound in

CHURCH/ A8

VELARDE

Joker to Palace: Stop AFP from harassing Satur

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and TJ Burgonio

JOKER ARROYO, AN ADMINISTRATION senatorial candidate, yesterday appealed to Malacañang to stop the military from harassing Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and other party-list representatives for crimes they allegedly committed decades ago.

"What the military is doing is not right. The supposed crimes happened after martial law. They (Ocampo and the others) had already been pardoned by (Presidents) Cory (Aquino) and (Fidel) Ramos," said Arroyo, who claimed to have knowledge of the cases because he served as the lawyer in some of them.

Arroyo, Aquino's first executive secretary and a human rights lawyer during martial law, said it was not right for the

JOKER/ A8

Abalos downplays NPO 'copying' incident

By Nikko Dizon and Norman Bordadora

THE COMMISION ON ELECTIONS yesterday confirmed three people at the National Printing Office had been caught copying the serial numbers of official ballots for the May elections, but downplayed the incident as a non-issue.

"I cannot see the relevance of copying the serial numbers to possible election fraud," Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said at a press conference, referring to an INQUIRER story about last week's incident involving casual employees of the NPO.

Nonetheless, Abalos said, the Comelec had urged the NPO to investigate the incident.

He said that according to Commissioner Ressurreccion Borra, head of the Comelec printing committee, a letter had been sent to NPO chief Felipe Evardone regarding the incident.

Abalos said the request for an investigation was initially delayed because Evardone had taken a leave of absence and Borra had to send a new request, this time addressed to acting NPO chief Marietta de Guzman.

Abalos said the incident could have been a "test" to see how "strict" the Comelec was in monitoring the operations of the NPO.

Aside from the official ballots, the NPO is also in charge of printing other election materials.

ABALOS/ A6

'CHEATING RAPS'

Palace orders speedy probe of Comelec fire

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Nikko Dizon

SMARTING AT INSINUATIONS that President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration was plotting to cheat in the May 14 balloting, Malacañang yesterday ordered an investigation into the fire that gutted a building in the Commission on Elections headquarters in Manila.

"The Palace is as interested as anybody else in a speedy, thorough and transparent investigation of the Comelec fire," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said. "We stand for clean, orderly and honest elections and we'd like to have an investigation on this started and completed as soon as possible," Bunye told reporters.

Bunye took exception to speculation that the Comelec fire and the reported copying of serial numbers of ballots at the National Printing Office could be part of plans to rig the May elections. *(See related story on this page.)*

"Intrigues and black propaganda should not get ahead of the truth, both in the case of the fire and the reported copying of ballots at the National Printing Office," Bunye said.

"The integrity and credibility of the forthcoming May elections are matters of high national interest, and the executive branch shall continue to back the Comelec in battling any and all attempts to undermine the conduct of the polls and in ensuring a clean and honest vote reflecting the people's choice," he added.

The predawn fire on Sunday razed the two-story wooden building in Intramuros which housed the offices of the Comelec executive director, deputy execu

PALACE/ A6

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO/PHILIPPINE HEART ASSOCIATION

FAMILIES share stories of hope, courage and life during the first "Camp Braveheart for Little Heroes" at the La Mesa Eco Park in late February.

'Brave hearts' celebrate life, love

By Gobleth Moulic
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—AT AN AGE WHEN they should be playing, Rainer Ples, Rodson Paul Samson and Juliet Quintinita have all undergone heart surgery.

Ples, 14, stopped going to school four years ago after undergoing major surgery to plug a hole in his heart.

Samson, 11, could no longer play basketball and table tennis after doctors corrected defects in his heart last year.

Quintinita, 8, had a permanent pacemaker implanted in her chest also last year.

Last month, Ples, Samson and Quintinita met for the first time and played to their hearts' content.

Bubbly and full of energy, they mingled with 50 other children who had undergone heart surgery or who suffer from various heart ailments.

The organizers of the daylong gathering fondly call them "brave hearts" for surviving what could

BRAVE HEARTS/ A9

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2007

EZ2: 13 1
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SUERTRES: Mid-Day 2 9 7 | Evening 7 1 2
(All in exact order)
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Second FrontPage

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern sections of Northern and Central Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered light rains, while Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: LAW DE GUZMAN, INQUIRER RESEARCH/03/012/07SOURCE: PAGASA

Palace seeks role in US probe

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG WANTS ITS VOICE HEARD IN the US Congressional investigations of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines—a move reelectionist administration Senators Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto have criticized.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration welcomes the probe and believes this will not strain strategic relations with the United States, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

"President Arroyo has condemned these killings from the start and the Philippine government has vowed to face this issue in the domestic and international arena with full transparency and resolve to uphold the rule of law," Bunye said.

"We shall help the US and any other government distinguish fact from propaganda on this issue and bring the light of truth to the world," he said.

Bunye said Philippine Ambassador to Washington Willy Gaa had asked the US Congress to include a "special team of representatives from the Philippines" to act as observers in the hearings to be conducted by the foreign relations committee of the US House of Representatives and the East Asia subcommittee of the US Senate this week.

He said the Philippine team, whose members have not been announced, would "assist the US authorities on any information needed for a fair, objective and balanced inquiry."

"We see no strain in the time-honored RP-US relationship as a result of this issue as both our countries do not tolerate or condone such atrocities," Bunye said.

"We take this as a constructive action," he said. "We intend to cooperate in this investigation. I'm sure they would like to get to the bottom of things."

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon said the AFP was open to the investigation. But he said if the United States planned to conduct an inquiry here, it should coordinate with the Philippine government.

But Sen. Joker Arroyo said the US hearings on the extrajudicial killings in the Philippines were an encroachment on the country's sovereignty.

"The extrajudicial killings have to be condemned but at the same time, we must not compromise our sovereignty. Just imagine, no self-respecting country will allow its officials to participate in the public hearings. Malacañang officials do not have the authority to compromise Philippine sovereignty," Arroyo said in an interview.

He said the US government "should first look at itself in the mirror" before looking into human rights violations in other countries. "Will they allow us to probe their torture of Iraqi prisoners and inhumane treatment of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay?" Arroyo said.

Recto concurred with Arroyo. He said the US should not be "poking its nose" in the Philippine situation.

Rep. Tom Lantos (Democrat, Calif.), chair of the House foreign relations committee, and Sen. Barbara Boxer (Democrat, Calif.), chair of the East Asia Sub-Committee of the Senate, will conduct separate hearings on human rights issues in the Philippines on March 14. *With Jerome Aning and Alcuin Papa*

Keep Mindanao peace, GMA orders military

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Alcuin Papa

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo yesterday ordered the military to stand down and preserve the fragile peace with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Mindanao.

The President convened a meeting of the National Security Council after the MILF declared that its 4-year ceasefire with the government was on the brink of collapse due to the military's "arrogance and defiance" following operations in Midsayap, North Cotabato.

Last week, soldiers and Muslim rebels exchanged fire in Midsayap, leaving 20 people dead, including a soldier.

"After meeting with Cabinet and senior officials of the National Security Council this afternoon, I have decided to step up all measures to enforce the law, preserve the atmosphere of peace and stability, and advance the ongoing peace talks between the government and the [MILF]," the Commander in Chief said in a statement issued late yesterday afternoon.

The President called the meeting after the awarding ceremonies for The Outstanding Philippine Soldiers 2006 of the Rotary Club of Makati Metro and the Metrobank Foundation at Malacañang.

To ensure that hostilities do not escalate, Ms Arroyo ordered the Armed Forces of the Philippines to "work closely with the established mechanisms of the peace process—the joint ceasefire committees, the ad hoc joint action group and the International Monitoring Team—to keep combatants in place and to increase vigilance against those intent on breaking the peace, on agitating the people, on pitting the government against MILF and communities against each other."

"Without impairing the operational flexibility and quick response of the AFP in countering threats of terrorism, insurgency and criminality, all commanders in the field are enjoined to be constantly aware of strategic implications of tactical actions in the proximity of MILF areas. I have also ordered restraint in the use of artillery and aerial bombing in the conduct of military operations," the President said.

On Sunday, however, rebels reportedly belonging to the MILF "held" then later released 16 soldiers from the Army's 103rd Brigade in Lumba Bayabao, Lanao del Sur, a military commander said yesterday. *With reports from AFP, Reuters*

CA upholds conviction of JI member

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE 2002 CONVICTION OF AN alleged Jemaah Islamiyah member stays after the Court of Appeals upheld with finality the Pasay City Regional Trial Court's verdict finding Agus Dwikarna liable for illegal possession of explosives.

The appellate court dismissed Dwikarna's petition to nullify the Pasay City RTC order on his conviction and 10- to 17-year prison sentence because Dwikarna failed to file his notice of appeal within the period set by the court.

Earlier, Dwikarna contended that he could still question the decision on his case before the appellate court, because he had filed a petition for review before the Supreme Court before the end of the 15-day period.

But the appellate court junked this argument, agreeing with the Pasay RTC that the period to file an appeal could only be interrupted by a motion for reconsideration, a motion for a new trial or an injunction.

"We have reviewed the records of the case and found that respondent judge correctly denied the petitioner's motion to reconsider the entry of judgment because the RTC decision had already attained finality," the appellate court said in its Feb. 28 decision.

Dwikarna and two others were arrested on March 13, 2002, at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport after a security check revealed that their bag contained items used to make improvised explosive devices. On July 12, 2002, he was found guilty of illegal possession of explosives and sentenced to 10 to 17 years in jail.

The Indonesian is reportedly a member of the Jemaah Islamiyah and has been linked to the Rizal Day bombings of 2000.

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'Atong' has kidney ailment, says doc

By Jocelyn R. Uy

CHARLIE "ATONG" ANG IS SUFFERING FROM A kidney disorder, his doctors confirmed yesterday.

Ang, a coaccused in the plunder case against deposed President Joseph Estrada, was granted a 10-hour medical pass by the Sandiganbayan yesterday to undergo a battery of tests at Metropolitan Hospital in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

Ang's physician, Dr. Ruben Gaw Ki, said he was suffering from nephrosclerosis, a condition where blood flow to the kidneys is hampered causing damage and is usually associated with hypertension.

Ang left Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan, Rizal, where he is detained, at 7 a.m. escorted by jail guards in a convoy of three vehicles and was returned before 5 p.m., according to Sandiganbayan Chief Sheriff Ed Urieta, who supervised the security for Ang.

His lawyer, Ruth Castelo, told the INQUIRER in a text message that Ang will be given medication and placed under observation for about four weeks.

"If necessary, he will be brought back here (hospital) for examination after four weeks," Castelo said.

Ang had complained of swelling in the legs and hypertension last week. His doctor, who examined him at the jail, found him to be suffering from pedal edema or swelling in both legs and erratic hypertension.

In a parallel development, Ang's lawyers yesterday assured the Sandiganbayan that their client fully understood his plea bargain agreement with the antigraft court which heard the plunder case against Estrada in which Ang is a co-accused.

In a two-page clarification on the plea bargain, which contained information that he had conspired with Estrada to divert P130 million in tobacco excise taxes from Ilocos Sur, Ang said it was clear to him that he was only admitting guilt to the lesser offense of corruption of a public official in relation to indirect bribery.

He stressed that he was not pleading guilty to plunder or any other charge.

DFA ends probe of missing Pinay

THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFfairs has closed the book on the case of the Filipino woman reported missing in Nigeria amid the wave of abductions of foreign nationals in the oil-rich country.

DFA spokesperson Claro Cristobal said yesterday the disappearance of businesswoman Josiebeth Foroozan was now a matter for the National Bureau of Investigation after records showed she had returned to the Philippines one month ago.

"As far as the DFA is concerned, it's a closed case because she is here, and we only handle cases concerning Filipinos abroad. We have turned the case over to the NBI. In our view, this was not an abduction," Cristobal said.

"Of course, if there is any help we can give to her children—her two children by her Iranian husband are still in Nigeria—then we will extend assistance," Cristobal added.

On Friday, the DFA said flight manifests showed Foroozan had flown from Nigeria to Germany and then onto the Philippines, arriving on Feb. 10. She had been reported abducted in Lagos three days earlier.

Her family in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, however, said she had not contacted them. Jane Gregorio, a sister, said they did not know where she could be.

Foroozan went missing amid a spate of kidnappings of foreign workers in Nigeria, among them 24 Filipino seafarers and an oil worker. The seamen and the oil worker, Winston Helera, have since been freed. *Tarra Quismundo*

Sandigan affirms graft charges vs gov't execs

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE SANDIGANBAYAN HAS AFFIRMED, for the second time, the graft case filed in 2000 against Alex Valencerina, a ranking official of the Government Service Insurance System.

Valencerina, a senior vice president for field operations of the GSIS, allegedly caused undue injury to the government by granting a $10-million surety bond to a real estate firm despite its submission of bogus collateral.

The antigraft court's First Division denied for lack of merit Valencerina's motion asking the court to overturn its December 2006 decision affirming the graft charges filed by the Ombudsman against him.

In his motion for reconsideration, Valencerina maintained that he was not the vice president of the GSIS Technical Service Group but of the marketing and support services group when the surety bond was processed, signed and issued to Ecobel Land Inc. in 1998.

As then vice president of the latter group, it was not his duty to certify or verify the validity of the land titles the firm had submitted as collateral, which was later discovered to be spurious, as he said.

He insisted his only "act of participation" in the release of the surety bond was his memorandum to the president and general manager of the GSIS together with Ecobel's payment guaranty bond application "for evaluation and endorsement of the Investment Committee."

But the antigraft court said such circumstances "would only mitigate any liability of the accused but will not serve to quash the information."

The Sandiganbayan has also affirmed the graft charges filed against Felicisimo Lazarte Jr., an engineer and chair of the National Housing Authority Regional Project Department.

Lazarte allegedly allowed the payment of P230,000 in public funds to a Makati-based construction company for a ghost project in Bacolod City in 1991. His arraignment has been set for tomorrow.

Lazarte was accused of conspiring with fellow officer Josephine Angsico and then NHA officials Virgilio Dacalos, Robert Balao and Josephine Espinosa for the payment of P232,628 to coaccused Arceo Cruz, general manager of A.C. Cruz Construction, for excavation and road-filling works at the Pahanocoy Sites and Services Project in Bacolod in 1991.

No construction work took place, however, as discovered through a special audit conducted by the Commission on Audit the following year.

In their motion to quash the information, Lazarte, Balao, Dacalos and Angsico said they could not be held accountable "as they are high-ranking officials based in Metro Manila and they relied solely on the recommendation of their subordinates in affixing their signatures."

After a reinvestigation of the case, the court dropped Balao, Dacalos and Angsico from the complaint after the prosecution failed to prove their participation in the crime.

The court, however, noted that Lazarte's alleged involvement in the offense was mentioned in a memorandum in May 2006 stating that the Inventory and Acceptance Committee, which he chaired, undertook the inventory and final evaluation of the private company's accomplishment.

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Ex-Angeles mayor dies

EUGENIO NICOLAS Henson Suarez, a former mayor of Angeles City, died last Sunday and will be buried today at 3 p.m. at La Pieta Memorial Park in that city.

Known as "Tatang Geni," he led Angeles from 1967 to 1971. Before that he was vice mayor from 1963 to 1967. His remains lie at Funeraria Angelina on Sto. Rosario Street (beside Holy Angel University).

C. Crame-Roxas; 77

CELIA CRAME-ROXas died on March 10 at the age of 77.

She is survived by her children and children-in-law Ogie and Judith, Akie and Merlyn, Maricel and Andy, and Catherine; grandchildren Noel, Jomon, Chat, Archie, Aileen, Shanine, Tin Tin, Andrea, Angelo, Annette, Mica and Jayme, and sisters Naty Crame-Rogers and Lily Crame-O'Keefe.

Her remains lie at Funeraria Nacional, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. Interment will be on March 15 at Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque City, after the 9 a.m. Mass at Funeraria Nacional.

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Montano waffles over funds

By Cynthia D. Balana

TAGBILARAN CITY—MOVIE ACtor Cesar Montano is planning to back out of the senatorial race and will likely run for governor of Bohol in the coming May elections if he does not get the funds promised him to run his campaign, according to highly placed sources in the Team Unity ticket.

Montano, who was absent for one week from the campaign sorties of the administration candidates, returned to this city Saturday and rejoined his teammates on the campaign trail.

Montano denied he planned to leave the administration coalition because of financial constraints and his poor showing in surveys tracking voters' preferences.

But the sources confirmed that Montano was indeed discouraged not by the survey results, but by the failure of the administration to provide financial support for his campaign as promised.

They said that he had yet to see the campaign funds earlier reported to amount to as much as P200 million promised by the administration in exchange for his last-minute inclusion in Team Unity.

Unlike his 11 team mates, Montano did not prepare well in advance for his campaign as he was recruited four days after the start of the campaign period.

The acclaimed actor and director was a substitute for Leyte Gov. Carlos Jericho Petilla after Petilla withdrew from the senatorial race to seek reelection in his province.

The sources said that Montano received only a small amount of money from Team Unity organizers to begin his campaign. The amount, they said, was not enough to pay for one million stickers and calendars and bankroll his campaign sorties.

"They always say that they will try their best," the sources said of the response of the Team Unity leadership every time the Montano camp asked about the financial support.

The same sources, who refused to be identified because of the sensitivity of the subject, said the amount given to Montano was only good for two weeks' campaign expenses and that Montano himself had dug into his own pocket to put up his campaign headquarters.

Reached for comment, Montano said he never talked about money with the coalition's campaign organizers.

Pressed to explain the persistent reports about his planned withdrawal from the senatorial contest, Montano simply smiled.

But he admitted that he indeed "took one step backward" early on in the campaign because he had to form his campaign staff, come up with a jingle and advertisements.

Montano also promised to "take 11 steps forward" as the campaign rolls on, in reference to the 12-0 victory goal the administration candidates had set for themselves.

CRISPIN Beltran with his wife Rosario "Ka Osang" and 5-month-old granddaughter Trixie are reunited at the Commission on Elections where Ka Bel filed his manifestation as a nominee of the Anakpawis party-list group. JOAN BONDOC

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, March 13, 2007
3rd Week of Lent

1st Reading: Dn 3:25, 34-43
Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35

Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, how many times must I forgive the offenses of my brother or sister? Seven times?" Jesus answered, "No, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

"This story throws light on the kingdom of heaven. A king decided to settle the accounts of his servants. Among the first was one who owed him ten thousand gold ingots. As the man could not repay the debt, the king commanded that he be sold as a slave with his wife, children and all his goods in payment.

"The official threw himself at the feet of the king and said, 'Give me time, and I will pay you back everything.' The king took pity on him and not only set him free but even canceled his debt.

"This official then left the king's presence and he met one of his companions who owed him a hundred pieces of silver. He grabbed him by the neck and almost strangled him, shouting, 'Pay me what you owe!' His companion threw himself at his feet and asked him, 'Give me time, and I will pay everything.' The other did not agree, but sent him to prison until he had paid all his debt. His companions saw what happened. They were indignant and so they went and reported everything to their lord. (...) The lord was now angry, so he handed his servant over to be punished, until he had paid his whole debt."

Jesus added, "So will my heavenly Father do with you unless each of you sincerely forgive your brother or sister."

Commentary

Azariah prays for his people in exile in Babylon; brought low because of their sins. He prays for a contrite heart and humble spirit as their sacrifice that will be acceptable. They follow with whole heart and he prays for deliverance from the evil they have done. We, as a nation and a people, do we pray for deliverance and change, being the sacrifice that God wants? Do we even acknowledge that our sin is grave and that we do not follow God unreservedly—or much at all, only when it suits us?

And again Jesus tries to get through to Peter and to us that we must forgive all others, as often as God has forgiven us: 70 x 7...don't count, start living forgiveness. The story is told of the debtor who can't pay but is forgiven graciously. But the debtor who was just forgiven cannot forgive another who could not pay a measly sum. It is the community that is shaken and comes to the king who does justice for all. We must live mercifully or we will know the justice of God, as individuals and as a nation!

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Abalos hurt by Sadain statements

By Nikko Dizon

COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. yesterday assailed reported statements by former Comelec Commissioner Mehol Sadain that suggested there was widespread fraud in the 2004 presidential elections.

"I'm really saddened (by his statements). I hope reports attributing to him statements that there was cheating in 2004 misquoted him. As part of the commission, I was shocked to hear that from him. It was like he admitted there was cheating if he was not misquoted," Abalos said at a press conference yesterday.

Abalos said that he felt "sorry" for Sadain and for the commission for the statements.

"They reflect badly on the commission because, imagine your own commissioner saying there was cheating. But the question is, where was he? What did he do?" Abalos said.

"It appears that he was so helpless he was not able to do anything if there was indeed cheating in 2004," Abalos added.

On Monday, the INQUIRER reported that Sadain had joined the new poll monitoring group, Halalang Marangal (Halal), because the structure that had led to alleged electoral fraud in 2004 was still in place.

Vote for carabao instead of GMA bets, says party-list candidate

ACCUSED REBEL AND ANAKPAWis party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran was granted liberty from "hospital arrest" yesterday to file his nomination papers at the Commission on Elections and immediately launched an anti-administration tirade.

"I ask the people not to vote for the candidates of President Macapagal-Arroyo and House Speaker Jose de Venecia. If there's a carabao running, vote for the carabao instead because the carabao helps in the work in the field and can be depended upon," Beltran said.

Anakpawis, a leftist group, is seeking representation in the House via the party-list elections. The group occupied two seats in the previous Congress.

Beltran, 73, popularly known as "Ka Bel," has been detained for nine months, mostly at the Philippine Heart Center in Quezon City. He is being tried for rebellion, a nonbailable offense, but the Makati City judge hearing the case allowed him to go to the Comelec to file his papers personally.

Accompanying Beltran were outgoing Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano and fellow nominees Joel Maglunsod of Kilusang Mayo Uno and Willy Marbella of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas.

About 100 Anakpawis members and supporters held a picket in front of the Comelec building as Beltran arrived. Sen. Jamby Madrigal was also there to lend moral support.

Beltran told reporters that he called himself "a victim of fascism, feudalism, imperialism and capitalism."

If Anakpawis were reelected, Beltran said, he would continue his crusade to protect human rights, seek a legislated increase in the minimum wage, promote social justice and peace and order.

"There's no peace in our country if there's no social justice, so let us respond to the needs of the weak and the laborer," he said.

Maglunsod, KMU secretary general and Anakpawis' third nominee, said the party-list group had sought to strengthen the representation of basic social sectors in the House of Representatives.

"The culture of political dynasty must end; we need more public officials coming from the ranks of ordinary people," Maglunsod said. "There should be more voices that will echo the interests of workers, urban and rural poor in the Congress."

Ofelia Balleta, Beltran's daughter and chief of staff, told the INQUIRER that Beltran almost forfeited his day pass after his blood pressure shot up to 180 over 100 as he was about to leave his hospital room.

Balleta said her father had to wait for his blood pressure to stabilize to at least 130 over 100 to be able to leave the hospital for the Comelec office in Intramuros, Manila. *Jerome Aning and Jeannette Andrade*

Ping: JDV welcome in GO anytime

SENATORIAL CANDIDATE PANFIlo "Ping" Lacson said the Genuine Opposition (GO) would welcome with open arms Speaker Jose de Venecia and the remnants of Lakas-CMD after the Kampi party of President Macapagal-Arroyo raided their ranks—should they decide to bolt the coalition.

"If the ranks of Lakas will be decimated by the poaching of Kampi, Speaker De Venecia is most welcome to join the Genuine Opposition," Lacson said in an interview with the INQUIRER.

Lacson said that Kampi, under the direction of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, was determined to become the dominant political party in the country at the expense of its coalition leader Lakas.

"I think Speaker De Venecia should wake up and realize that his party is being shredded under his very nose," said Lacson.

"Kampi is raiding and undermining the ranks of Lakas. I would not be surprised if Lakas will leave the administration coalition," he added.

Lacson said GO was keen on having De Venecia on its side to form an alliance similar to Lakas' rainbow coalition in the House of Representatives. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

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ELECTION '07

Watchdog turns to jingle to get message across

IF CANDIDATES CAN DO IT, election watchdogs can do it better—use jingles to court voters, that is.

Organizations have banded together to promote clean elections and they're doing it using a song whose theme is: Voters should not sell their votes and they should vote with their conscience.

Groups that attended the Philippine Election Forum (PEF), a multipronged interagency effort to protect the electoral process, have come up with a jingle advocating a values-oriented vote among the millions-strong electorate that will troop to the polling precincts this May.

Envisioned to take on the airwaves, television and public assemblies (and karaoke?), the two-and-a-half minute jingle spells out its message in four letters: A-S-I-N or "Ating Siyasatin Ihahalal Natin, Ang Suhol Iwaksi Natin."

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Virgilio Hernandez, PEF secretary general, explained the jingle's message: "Every one knows how important the election is. [The jingle] is a reminder to all that voters should not be swayed by money, influence or power. Voters should make a choice based on the performance of candidates or what they can do."

The ASIN jingle was composed and performed by volunteers from the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC), among the several organizations that stepped up for the election monitoring effort, touted as the biggest the country has seen yet.

"It would be good if children could learn the jingle and start singing it to their parents so they will be reminded [to vote with their conscience]," said PCEC's Rev. Jonel Milan during the PEF plenary session held recently at the Philippine Trade Training Center in Pasay City.

The jingle, which has Filipino lyrics and is performed with a mid-tempo groove, will appeal to any audience, even those below the voting age.

Here's an excerpt: "Let's analyze those we will vote for. Toward change, choose the right person, one who is ready, one who will serve sincerely, one whose only aim is to move the country forward. Let's reject bribes. Clean and peaceful elections is victory for the nation." *Tarra Quismundo*

Pacquiao House bid angers fans

By Christian V. Esguerra

NOW THAT THEIR IDOL'S DECISION APpears to be final, fans of Manny Pacquiao from his own province are dumping him for good, "both in boxing and politics."

So it appears from the angry, below-the-belt messages posted on Internet chat sites soon after the pride of General Santos City announced on Sunday that he would run for the congressional seat in his home province of South Cotabato.

A veteran professional boxer who also hails from General Santos, but who did not want to be identified, said, "He'll lose. The people in our place look up to him as a boxer, not as a congressman."

Insults in cyberspace

The comment was more polite than the insults heaped on Pacquiao in cyberspace.

"He is destined to fall real hard," wrote a GenSan native in the website Boxing Confidential, upon learning of Pacquiao's decision. "Millions of ex-fans (especially us from General Santos) are raring to dump him in the garbage this coming elections. I'm not proud at all of being Pinoy at this moment."

The fan was reacting to an article by Boxing Confidential's Ricardo Lois who questioned Pacquiao's seemingly distracted preparation for his April 14 bout against the obscure but undefeated Jorge Solis of Mexico in San Antonio, Texas.

Lois said Pacquiao was "sowing the seeds of another fistic upset," likening his fate to that suffered by Mike Tyson and Lennox Lewis after they both lost what were deemed to be easy assignments against Buster Douglas and Hasim Rahman, respectively.

A fan calling himself "Buwiset Na Kay Pacman" (Already Incensed with Pacquiao) wrote that he would campaign against his erstwhile idol, arguably the world's top boxer pound-for-pound.

Searing messages

On Pacquiao's own website (www.mannypacquiao.ph), a number of fans were wishing for a loss in the May elections.

But searing messages even from his own fans appeared to only embolden the 28-year-old Pacquiao in his decision to run for Congress in the first district of South Cotobato and General Santos City.

In making his announcement the other day, Pacquiao said he was taking them as a challenge, noting that they wouldn't keep him from providing honest service to his people.

Wrote "Mencing" in Boxing Confidential: "I'm a full-blooded Pacfan, but I'm shaking my head now. He has no concern for his fans...from being the hero of GenSan, he has become the 'idiot of GenSan.'"

Pacquiao's political foe, reelectionist Rep. Darlene Antonino-Custodio yesterday said she would never resort to character assassination in her campaign against the hugely popular boxer.

High-level campaign

"We're capable of a high-level campaign," she told the INQUIRER. "It's just sad that once, we had him as a unifying factor. Now, the people can't help but be divided in their opinion on him. We're very proud of Manny, but a lot of people also don't want him to run."

Custodio, who's seeking a third and last term, said she was not fazed by the prospect of going against Pacquiao who boasts both popularity and political machinery. Pacquiao is a member of the Lito Atienza wing of the Liberal Party, which is allied with President Macapagal-Arroyo's party.

"Political machinery relies on local officials," she said. "In my case, all four mayors in my district are behind me."

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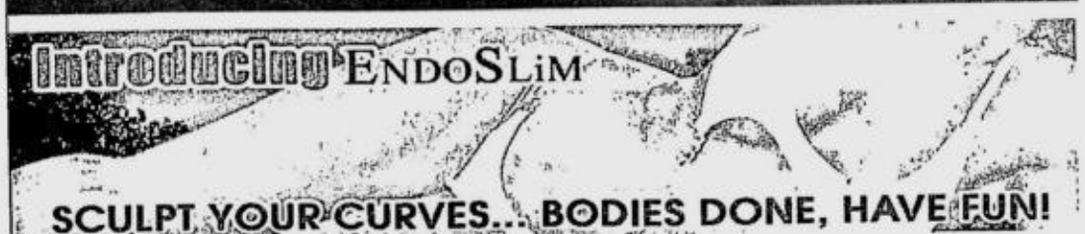

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Palace orders speedy probe of Comelec fire

From page A1

tive director for operations and for administration, the education and information division, records division, administration, library and Commission on Audit.

The Department of Interior and Local Government has formed a team to look into the blaze. "This is a big area. It will probably take us 15 to 30 days to come up with our findings," said Supt. Fennimore Jaudian of the DILG interagency anti-arson task force.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos said none of the materials needed for the May elections were damaged because these were kept in the Comelec main headquarters at the adjacent Palacio del Gobernador building. He said the balloting would proceed as scheduled.

Negligence

Yesterday, Abalos again scotched speculation that sabotage was behind Sunday's fire. "What will be gained from burning down the old building?" he said. He said that if the intention was to disrupt the May election, the main headquarters at the Palacio del Governador should have been burned.

At the start of a news conference, Abalos said he found it funny that one radio commentator had joked in a song about the three fires that had occurred on his watch as Mandaluyong mayor and as Comelec chair.

"Kulang na lang sabihin si Abalos manununog (He fell short of accusing me of being an arsonist)," he said, laughing. He recalled that arson charges were filed against him because of a fire in a Mandaluyong public market. Another fire also hit his city hall.

"Nagkataon na lahat ng pinuntahan ko a fire hazards (It just happened that the places I went to were fire hazards)," he said.

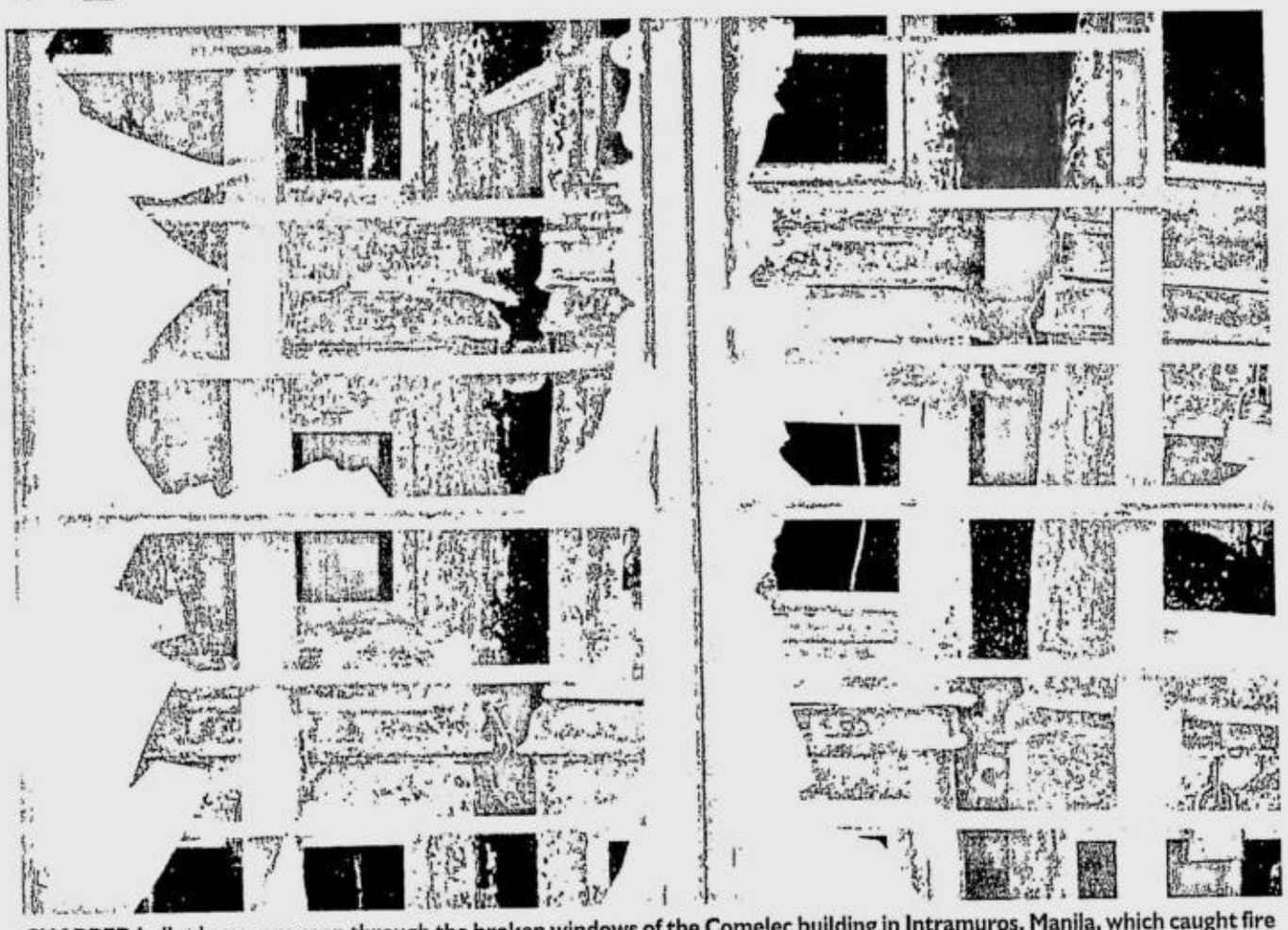
Abalos said that Comelec executive director Pio Jose Joson told him the Comelec fire was likely caused by someone's "negligence" and not faulty electrical wiring or an electrical overload.

Abalos met with the Comelec's six other commissioners and senior directors yesterday morning for a briefing on what was lost in the fire.

Documents burned

Among the documents burned in the fire were:

- Original records pertaining to 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004 election cases, classified as special action, special cases, special proceeding, undocketed and other contentious cases and transcripts of stenograhic notes;
- Verification reports submitted by the Comelec field offices regarding the registration of party-list/political parties for the 2007 election;
- Supreme Court cases pertaining to 1987 up to 2005 election cases;
- Excerpts/minutes of the commission en banc meetings from 1988 to 2003;
- Cassette tapes containing the proceedings of the 1995 and 1998 National Board of Canvassers; and
- Transcript/stenographic notes of the 1995 and 1998 proceedings of the National Board of Canvassers.



CHARRED ballot boxes are seen through the broken windows of the Comelec building in Intramuros, Manila, which caught fire early morning of Sunday. Fire marshals are investigating the cause of the fire. REM ZAMORA

Election lawyer Leila de Lima told the INQUIRER that these statistical data and records will be needed in planning and analyzing the 2007 elections.

Moreover, pending election cases were a "matter of life and death" for the protestees and protesters, she added. De Lima said she herself had five pending cases, the records of which were lost in the fire.

She confirmed that the ballot boxes needed for her case involving the unseated mayor of Lemery, Batangas, were burned. *With a report from Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

FACADE of the National Printing Office in Quezon City: Comelec orders investigation. JOAN BONDOC

Abalos downplays NPO 'copying' incident

From page A1

"I don't really know what these men's motive was. But let's allow the NPO to investigate their men first," Abalos said.

Commissioners knew

Abalos said the Comelec allocation committee and NPO management knew the serial numbers of the ballots and the areas where these ballots would be assigned.

Comelec spokesperson James Arthur Jimenez said the Comelec commissioners were immediately informed of the incident. This was contrary to what Abalos had said on Sunday, when he told the INQUIRER that he was unaware of such a report.

Jimenez said he was wondering why the incident was being turned into an "issue."

"It was immediately handled. They were caught immediately," Jimenez said. "Commissioner Borra is like the mayor at the NPO. From what I heard from him, there was no problem with that (incident). The information they were copying was not even sensitive. I don't understand what the issue is."

Abalos' experience

Abalos said that the candidates themselves should be aware of the serial numbers of the official ballots sent to their cities or municipalities to help them protect their votes.

"That was how I was able to find out that I was being cheated before," said Abalos, a long-time mayor of Mandaluyong City.

He said candidates could ask the Comelec election officer what the serial numbers are of the ballots assigned to their areas.

A confidential matter

An INQUIRER source said yesterday the incident could be considered serious if the NPO employees were ordered by a politician or a political party to copy the serial numbers and the places where the official ballots would be sent.

"There should still be confidentiality of these serial numbers. These shouldn't be revealed," the source said, requesting anonymity.

The source also disagreed with Abalos that candidates should know the serial numbers of the official ballots.

"That shouldn't be allowed. It could cause harm (to the elections). Fraudulent ballots could be printed," the source said.

Malacañang hands-off

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye took exception to speculation that the incident could be part of plans to rig the May elections.

He said "black propaganda should not get ahead of the truth."

Bunye said it was now up to the Comelec to investigate the matter.

He said the NPO, which prints ballots, election returns and certificates of canvass, automatically comes under Comelec supervision during elections.

Bunye said all major political parties were also authorized to monitor NPO activities related to the elections.

Concerns about cheating

The incident has raised concerns because of allegations of massive cheating during the 2004 presidential election involving the tampering of election results by some poll officials supposedly to favor President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Last year, one Arsenio Rosalan claimed to have been involved in a secret operation to manufacture fake election returns and substitute them for genuine returns to help ensure Ms Arroyo's victory.

Evardone's case

The Arroyo camp denied allegations of cheating and the charges of cheating have not been proved.

The NPO recently came into controversy after the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission recommended to Malacañang the dismissal of Evardone for graft and violations of the government's procurement laws.

Evardone, who denied the allegations, is the brother of Team Unity media coordinator and Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita has yet to act on the PAGC recommendation.

Bunye said Malacañang was studying the PAGC recommendation against Felipe Evardone and would give it "due course."

He said Evardone had ceased to have control over the NPO since his leave of absence took effect on March 1, the day his brother was named to Team Unity.

An NPO official told the INQUIRER agency employees were just waiting for Evardone to leave office before talking about what they knew about alleged irregularities in the printing office because they were afraid of financial reprisals.

"They will come out of the woodwork. Right now, they are afraid of losing a good-sized income because of cancelled overtime pay," said an official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The unnamed source and former NPO administrative officer Sylvia Banda said the election period was one factor that could keep NPO personnel from talking about they know.

"NPO employees are prevented from talking to anybody from the media. If they go against the director, their overtime pay can easily be disallowed," the unnamed official said.

Banda said elections were the only time the NPO personnel earned a windfall from overtime.

"One can earn up to 200 percent of his monthly salary. Officials can earn up to more than P40,000 a week while rank and file employees can easily earn P15,000 a week," Banda said.

"It will be a huge loss for one's family if this benefit is removed just because you want to tell on alleged irregularities," she said.

Evardone last week said the PAGC was bent on destroying people's reputations and that the cases filed against him were by printing firms which "notoriously undesirable." *With a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana*

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Good times are back for rich folk in Manila

From page A1

niments to checking out the dance floor.

Imelda, the shopaholic wife of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, made conspicuous consumption fashionable in the Philippines in the 1970s and 1980s when the phrase "Imeldific" was coined to describe acts of excess.

But her fall from grace after Marcos was ousted in 1986, a succession of coups and a sickly economy made worse by the Asian financial crisis reined in the spending.

Now, according to executives of luxury hotels, upscale boutiques and sports car dealerships, the good times are back.

"It's a return to yuppiedom," Tim Yap, one of Embassy's co-owners, told Reuters. "Right now, the young generation is a generation that works really hard and wants to reward itself."

Across the Philippines' sprawling metropolis, the small ranks of the wealthy are increasing as record remittances from nearly 9 million Filipinos—driven abroad by poverty and a lack of opportunity—fuel consumer demand and a property boom.

High optimism

A record $14 billion worth of inflows last year helped swell the wallets of real estate magnates, retail chiefs and entrepreneurs back home and pushed the stock market up around 42 percent.

"The economy is doing well," said Manuel Salak, county manager of ING Bank in the Philippines. "There is stability and more optimism and more investments are being made."

Despite recent global market turbulence, the Philippine index is up 2.7 percent so far this year and projected remittances of $14.7 billion are expected to shield the domestic economy from future stock exchange swoons.

Optimism among Philippine companies is at a record high and top executives and entrepreneurs are buying new motors and diamond encrusted necklaces at up to P5 million ($102,600) a pop.

"There is a lot of confidence in the future so people are not afraid to spend, they can see that it's going to get better," said one of Manila's top jewelry dealers, whose sales are up 15 percent on last year.

"We forecast even better times," said the jeweler, who declined to be identified.

Suitcase bankers

Driven by Chinese industrialization, Asia is minting "high-net-worth individuals"—people with more than $1 million in financial assets excluding their homes—at the fastest pace in the world.

But the Philippines, where political turmoil and a heavy debt burden have kept the economy limping behind fast-paced neighbors, was mostly under the radar for private bankers.

There is a clutch of super wealthy people such as Lucio Tan, the Philippines' richest man according to Forbes magazine with a net worth estimated at $1.7 billion, but they are a miniscule part of an 87 million population, nearly half of whom live on less than $2 a day. Two other families—the Ayalas and the Sys—made it to the Forbes' billionaires' list and ranked higher than Tan.

There is no official data on the number of middle-income and high-income people living in the Philippines but in Indonesia, Southeast Asia's largest economy, high-net-worth individuals accounted for just 0.01 percent of the adult population in 2005, according to a joint study by Merrill Lynch and Capgemini.

With wealth increasing and new investment opportunities opening up in the Philippines, the so-called "suitcase bankers" are now flying in, booking out rooms in the capital's swankiest hotels as they comb Metro Manila for business.

Growing middle class

"My competitors are back," said Salak. "You see the business class section of Cathay Pacific and Singapore Airlines full now."

The middle class is also expanding as booming outsourcing centers hire thousands of 20-somethings. Entry level wages have risen as much as 69 percent since 2003 and the extra cash is frequently spent on eating out, clothes and nightclubbing.

"They are not going to go out and buy Louis Vuitton all of a sudden but they are looking at good brands," said Vladimir Bunoan, editor of Personal Fortune, a new magazine aimed at young managers in the outsourcing sector.

"There is quite a number of people out there with enough money, I think, to spend on Starbucks every day."

Guiltless generation

After the Marcoses, the wealthy adopted a low profile.

Kidnap fears and a degree of guilt about having so much money in a poor country kept many of the traditionally rich families circumspect.

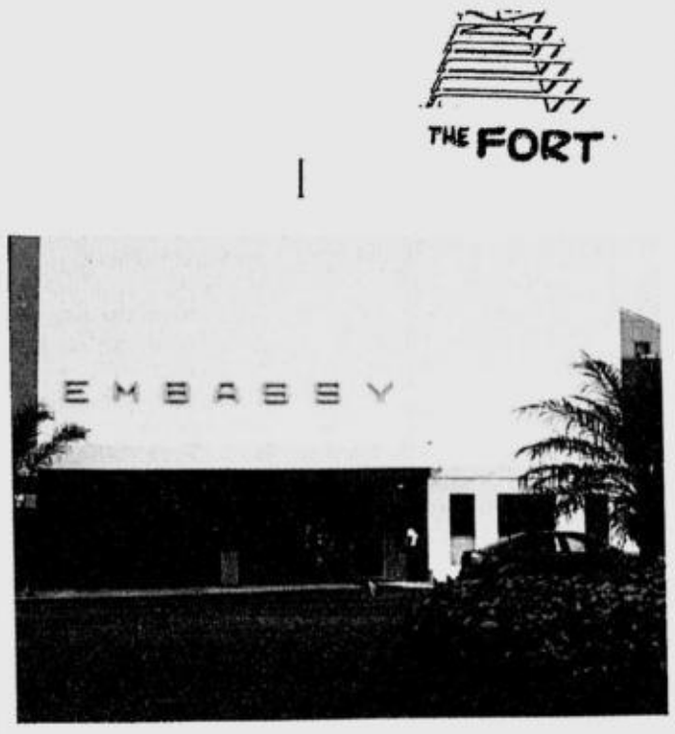
But up and coming business people, many of whom are too young to remember the Marcos era, want to party and pamper, like peers in Hong Kong, Singapore and Shanghai.

"The younger generation, without connoting anything negative, is more passionate, is more brash," said Wellington Soong, president of Jaguar Philippines, which sold 60 Jaguars and Land Rovers in 2006 and aims to sell 100 this year.

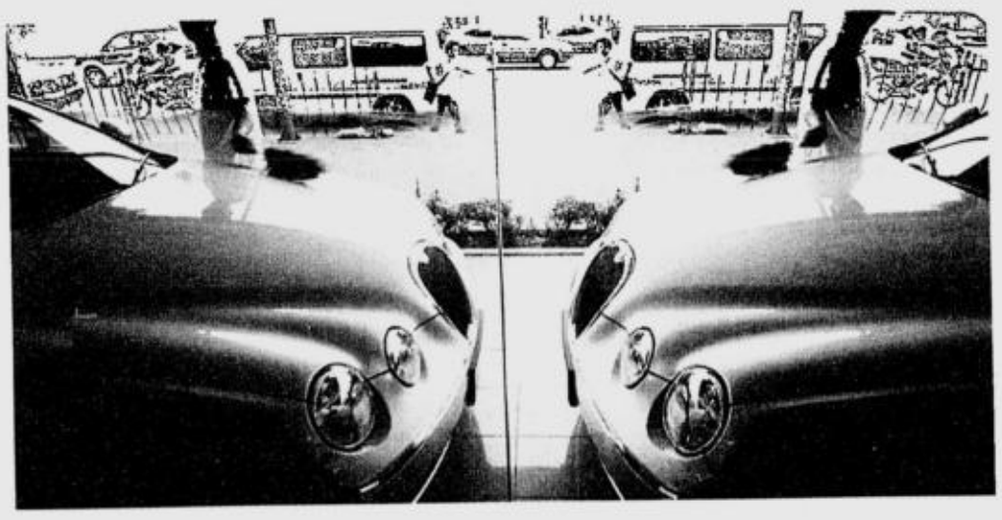
"Wealth is acquired at a faster rate. The impatience can be seen in their behavior."

Over at Embassy, where Imelda's grandson promotes Monday nights and the lady herself recently appeared for a twirl across the tiles, Yap said consciences were not bothered by the yawning gap between rich and poor in the city.

"There is this mind-set, which I think is so passe, that says: 'The country is in shambles and the country is having a hard time and you are out there partying.' But this generation is guiltless when it comes to that." *Reuters*



EMBASSY at The Fort in Taguig City: Where the rich and famous party by invitation only. PDI PHOTO/RUDY ESPERAS



A WORKER dusts off a Jaguar at a showroom in Makati City. The dealer of the high-end British automobile is upbeat about selling more cars this year. REUTERS

Nursing test retake slated for June 11-12

From page A1

(Psychiatric Mental Health) will be administered by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), said Brion.

Around 17,000 examinees passed the controversial tests in 2006. Around 10,000 of them are likely to retake the exams, according to the officers of the Philippine Nurses Association (PNA).

The retake was provided for in an executive order signed over the weekend by President Macapagal-Arroyo, Brion told reporters at the National Reintegration Center of overseas Filipino workers in Manila.

Last month, the US Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools required all passers of the 2006 board exam to retake Tests 3 and 5, whose results were allegedly leaked, despite PRC's recalculation of the final grades.

Brion, however, assured the passers of the 2006 exam that they could still keep their licenses even if they flunked the retake.

Retake not for licensing

"The retake is not for licensing—that's PRC's job—but for employability. That's why the labor department is in charge, so that those who want to work in the US can get accepted," said Brion.

Applications for the review will be accepted by the PRC from March 19 to April 4, while the review sessions will be held from April 16 until June 3, he said.

Brion said he had also recommended to the President that the government waive the application fee and provide some sort of financial assistance for the examinees' review.

The labor department will monitor all stages of the voluntary examination process.

The secretary, together with the BON, will release the names of those who pass the examination, notify the individual nominees, and furnish the CGFNS with the official results and the regularity of the examination.

The retake will be discussed by government officials and deans of participating schools on March 17 at the University of the Philippines School of Nursing.

American Nursing Assn

The American Nurses Association has reportedly proposed that a complete retake of the 2006 exams be required for those who plan to work in the United States.

"We're still studying the approach to the ANA," Brion said. "We might ask for a representation with them and seek the help of the CGFNS with whom we've already had long discussions," Brion added.

ANA is not like CGFNS, which is a semi-regulatory agency that issues the so-called VisaScreen certificates for those who want to work in the United States, said Brion.

"I understand that what they issued was a resolution and that they wrote the PRC about it," said Brion. "We'll see if they will have influence in the hiring of Filipino nurses."

PNA interpretation

"The ANA passed a resolution to recommend that all applicants wishing to work in the US be required to take a new licensure test," Leah Paquiz, the president of PNA, ANA's counterpart here, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

"It did not say to retake the whole test. It just upheld the decision of the CGFNS," Paquiz added.

But in a statement posted on its website on March 2, which spawned different interpretations, ANA also said:

"ANA has resolved that all passing applicants of the June 2006 Philippine nurse licensure exam wishing to be considered for entrance into the United States to practice nursing should be required to retake a new and different nurse licensure test and obtain a passing score."

Some groups said the statement meant the retake of all the tests. But Paquiz said that while ANA recommended the retake of a new test, it did not say nurses should retake all the tests.

Visa certification test

Paquiz described ANA as a private organization, just like the PNA.

She said a meeting of BON members and leaders of nurses' organizations agreed to go along with the CGFNS decision requiring a retake of Tests 3 and 5.

"We thank the government for starting to work on the review process for the affected nurses," Paquiz said.

Some nursing professors earlier said that since the nurses were keeping their licenses, the retake should be called a "certification for VisaScreening test."

Interested nurses can only retake the exams within the year, otherwise it will spell the end of their dreams to work in the United States, the professors explained.

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Church urged to name candidates

From page A1

Parañaque City for their regular weekly prayer gathering.

El Shaddai counts some five million members. Because of the huge membership of El Shaddai, which he can summon at anytime, Velarde wields some clout in the Catholic Church and the government.

He serves as a spiritual adviser to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

When Malacañang's allies in the local governments and the House of Representatives pushed for Charter change last year, Velarde went all out against it and vowed to mobilize his followers to stop the move.

A day after Velarde denounced the House move to amend the Charter without the participation of the Senate, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines issued a statement against the Malacañang-backed initiative.

Malacañang and the House then backed off.

Velarde, who is courted by politicians during elections for his endorsement, said the Church-State separation applied to running the government.

Emulate Iglesia ni Cristo

He said the Catholic Church should emulate the leadership exercised by the Iglesia Ni Cristo during elections.

"The Iglesia ni Cristo (chooses candidates) before the election. That's why it is leading its flock," Velarde said.

The INC, a religious sect, is sought by presidential and other candidates because of its practice of voting as a bloc.

The INC gives its members a sample ballot containing the names of the candidates that its leadership has chosen. So does Velarde.

In contrast, the Catholic Church leaves its members to make their choices, said Velarde.

Background checks

"They (Church leaders) are shying away. They presume all the people know how to discern (the right candidates) but admittedly not many, not even myself, can decide who are the right persons who can be there (in the Senate)," he said.

He observed that the bishops and the priests were more well-informed than the laity about the candidates. "They can make background checks," the El Shaddai leader said.

Velarde said a more active role for leaders of the Church was necessary to arrest public indifference toward the election.

"If you notice the people have no interest in this campaign, that is why they (administration and the opposition candidates) cannot gather crowds," he said.

Losing interest dangerous

He said it was "very dangerous" for people to lose interest in the elections.

"Why? Because the tendency to be indifferent is inviting those in power to abuse power," he said. "The attitude not to mind the government even if it cheats should be arrested. That may lead to something worse in the future."

He said people were losing interest in elections because their leaders, particularly their spiritual leaders, were showing a lack of interest.

"People now are looking for leadership both in the Church and in government. That is my personal observation because I, for one, am looking for real leaders," Velarde said.

Campaigning for Buhay

He said he had been going around the country to encourage El Shaddai members to exercise their right of suffrage and to choose their next leaders well.

"In the last elections, even many El Shaddai members did not vote because there was no leadership (from the Church). That's why I'm now going around," Velarde said.

He said he was campaigning in particular for the El Shaddai party-list group, Buhay, which advocates the Church's pro-life stance.

Velarde said Buhay, which has two seats in the House of Representatives, one of which is held by Velarde's son Rene, would focus on the provision of health care for the unborn and young children.

"The party-list has no face and people don't know the people behind it. That's why I'm going around to explain the advocacy of Buhay," he said.

It's final: Vilma running for governor of Batangas

From page A1

"I am a gracious lady but don't push me too hard ... I have been pushed too hard," Santos told the boisterous crowd.

Her decision threw the fight for the top post of Batangas into a possible three-way race involving Sanchez and Santos' own brother-in-law, Vice Gov. Ricky Recto.

The vice governor is the brother of Santos' husband, Sen. Ralph Recto who, like his wife, is running under the banner of President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration.

Vice President Noli de Castro, reelectionist Sen. Joker Arroyo and Senator Recto attended the two-hour rally to show their support.

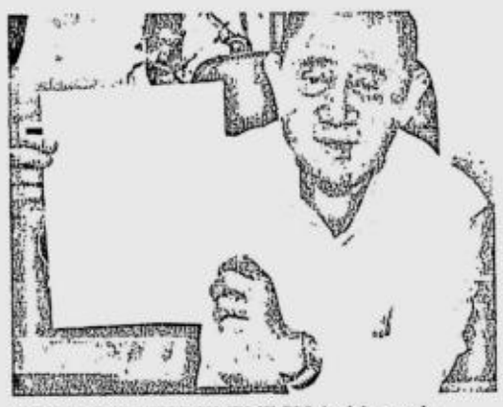
Batangas could play a key role in the May 14 senatorial elections. It has a voting power of 1.2 million, believed to be among the biggest in the country.

During her 11-minute speech, Santos reiterated that nobody had influenced her decision to run for the province's top post.

'God, take over'

"I've said this many times before. Nobody can manipulate me on what I should do, what I'm going to say and what my decision will be," she said.

"I told you last week that I will think as a leader. Now, I am facing all of you as a leader," she said. "I will stand by you because you are my family."



SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA holds up the document attesting that the Lakas-CMD party is endorsing the candidacy of Vilma Santos for governor of Batangas. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

RICKY RECTO: The die is cast.

SANCHEZ: Kampi and governors rooting for him.

She started her speech by saying: "What I will say is not scripted. Every word I say comes from my heart."

Santos described her decision to run for governor as a "new challenge, a new test" for her.

"I will just offer everything to God and pray to him, 'God, take over,'" she said.

Just politics

On whether she was ready to face her brother-in-law in the election, Santos said: "Definitely!... This is just politics. All of this will end and we'll be together as a family."

Her announcement was timed with the national government's awarding of certificates of lot award (Cola) to 470 beneficiaries of the Villa sa Riles socialized housing project. The recipients were residents living near the old Philippine National Railway tracks in Barangays Mataas na Lupa and Bugtong na Pulo.

De Castro, guest of honor for the award ceremony, quipped: "There are many people here. Looks like I might run for Batangas governor."

Nine of Batangas' 34 municipal mayors showed up at Santos' rally—against the 14 who attended the pro-Sanchez rally at the Batangas provincial capitol earlier yesterday.

Also present at Santos' rally were former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez and businessman Edwin Ermita, who it is believed will be Santos'-likely running mate.

Ermita is the son of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

No tears, this time

Clad in a pink blouse and blazer, Santos looked more buoyant yesterday than last week when she cried the minute she stepped onstage to address her supporters.

Although her voice cracked when she started her speech, Santos did not shed a tear this time.

"I actually wrote down all my thoughts," she said, showing pieces of bond paper containing her handwritten notes.

While she did not mention the name of Ricky Recto, Santos did not hide her displeasure at her brother-in-law's statement about her supposed lack of skills to run the provincial government.

"Nobody can claim that he alone could serve the people best. That he alone has the skills to lead. We all have God-given talents. It is not words but helping each other that will make a house run smoothly," she said.

Ricky said in a phone interview that he respected Santos' decision.

So be it

He declined to comment on whether he would give up his gubernatorial ambitions and run for Congress instead.

"As of now, nothing else is final since we're not yet in the deadline for the filing of candidacies."

Asked if he would still run for governor, he said, "As of now, everything stays the same."

On the prospect of the Rectos battling each other for the same post, he said, "So let it be."

Earlier yesterday, in front of thousands of Batangas residents at the provincial capitol, at least 20 disgruntled members of the ruling Lakas-CMD quit the country's most dominant political party and joined Ms Arroyo's Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) in a mass oath-taking ceremony.

The group, led by Senior Board Member Mark Leviste and Board Member Lianda Bolilia, expressed their support for Sanchez.

"I felt we were not treated fairly by the leadership of Lakas. It's as though the party has no room left for us," Leviste, the No. 3 political leader of the province, told the INQUIRER.

Leviste was among the Lakas members who openly criticized Secretary Ermita's efforts to push Santos' candidacy.

Sanchez led the oath-taking of some 120 local officials who joined Kampi.

Police put the crowd at the Sanchez affair at 12,000.

Fighting speech

In his speech, Sanchez assailed Santos, without directly naming her, for allegedly acting like a superstar.

"Will you vote for someone who spends three hours just to put on her makeup? Will you vote for someone who reports to City Hall just once a week? Or someone who needs alcohol after shaking the hands of the people?" he said.

"The province does not need a part-time governor. What we need is a leader who will lead the province to economic progress."

Sanchez, who was named in Senate hearings two years ago as allegedly one of the country's biggest jueteng lords—an allegation he strongly denies—said he was not affected by Santos' declaration.

"I'm no actor. So, I'm sure that those who came here to support me are not my fans but those who believe in what I can do. Just like in 2004, I am confident that I will again win as governor. I am sure the people know who had helped them improve their lives."

Joker to Palace: Stop AFP from harassing Satur

From page A1

investigation of and hearings on the alleged crimes that happened decades ago to continue.

Police raided Ocampo's house and searched two other residences in a compound in Heroes Hill, Quezon City, on Saturday morning, but failed to find him.

Ocampo, communist leaders Jose Ma. Sison and Luis Jalandoni, and 50 others have been ordered arrested on multiple murder charges arising from the discovery of a mass grave in Inopacan, Leyte, in August last year. They flatly denied the charges.

Military investigators claimed that the 67 skeletal remains dug up in Sapang Daku in Barangay Caulisihan were victims of a communist party purge of suspected military spies 22 years ago.

Only 15 remains were identified by their relatives.

Ocampo said he was imprisoned in a military stockade at the time of the supposed killings.

Sison, founding chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines, was under maximum security detention by the military from 1977 to 1985.

In a statement from Utrecht, the Netherlands, where he is in exile, Sison said he was not in a position from 1984 to 1986 or at any other time to sign any kind of order to kill people in Leyte or elsewhere."

Jalandoni has been out of the country since the 1970s, according to CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal.

Three more party-list lawmakers may face arrest because murder charges have been filed against them in Nueva Ecija, said a human rights lawyer.

Bayan Muna Rep. Teddy Casiño, Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano and Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza, along with Ocampo, are accused of involvement in the murders of supporters of the party-list group Akbayan in Bongabong, Nueva Ecija, said lawyer Nere Colmenares.

Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran has been in detention since February last year for crimes he allegedly committed during the Marcos regime.

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales said over the weekend that the Arroyo administration was seeking the arrest of Ocampo because of his past sins and his links to the CPP.

Ocampo was the spokesperson of the National Democratic Front, the political arm of the CPP, during the peace talks with the Aquino administration in December 1986.

The military has noted that Bayan Muna, Anakpawis and Gabriela have not denounced the violence perpetrated by the New People's Army, the armed wing of the CPP.

Gonzales said armed rebellion was no longer acceptable as a means of achieving political change.

Military factions

Senator Arroyo, who is on the senatorial slate of the administration's Team Unity, believed that the military was torn between two factions—the first which is hot on running down the communists and the second, the enlightened and progressive group which believes in peaceful means to end the insurgency.

"The government's policy is to let them engage in a parliamentary struggle as opposed to armed struggle. This is better because there are no more gunfights," he said.

Allowing the militant groups to seek a seat in Congress has been the policy of the past administrations, according to Arroyo.

"What they (the military) are doing is contrary to government policy," he said.

Persecution

Former UP president Francisco Nemenzo and groups in the Leftist movement scored the government's "persecution" of Ocampo.

"To please their patroness in Malacañang, the overzealous state prosecutor and the overzealous judge overlooked the chronology of events," Nemenzo, chair of Laban ng Masa, said in a statement.

Ocampo was ordered arrested last week by Judge Ephraim Abando of the Regional Trial Court in Hilongos, Leyte, in connection with the discovery of a supposed mass grave.

"These alleged murders were allegedly committed in Leyte in 1984 while Ocampo was detained in Bicutan until 1985. I do not believe in his supernatural power to be in two places at once," Nemenzo said.

Fabrication

This "clumsy fabrication" destroys "what little credibility GMA (President Macapagal-Arroyo) has left," he said. "Like the massive cheating in 2004, this further delegitimizes her illegitimate regime."

Wilson Fortaleza, Sanlakas national chair, said that despite his group's past differences with Bayan Muna, "Ka Satur's case is a clear attempt to silence all marginalized groups running under the party-list system."

Fortaleza noted that the party-list system itself was a mere token of what was rightfully due the underrepresented sectors.

"The government's plan to undermine legitimate party-list groups, by going after Ka Satur, is a reversal of a state policy on representation. Prior to this, all left party-list organizations were considered enemies of the state in videos against terrorism being shown by the military in the communities," the Sanlakas chair said.

Aghast

Ocampo's camp was aghast that he was ordered arrested last week, but he only received a copy of a prosecutor's resolution recommending the filing of multiple murder charges and issuance of arrest warrant against him only yesterday.

That's a clear sign of the legal shortcuts, and the railroading of the filing of information by two prosecutors in the case, which deprives Ocampo of his constitutional right to due process," Ocampo's legal counsel Romeo Capulong said.

Ocampo was ordered arrested Wednesday last week. But his camp received by registered mail only yesterday a copy of Assistant Provincial Prosecutor Rosulo Vivero's resolution that became the basis for the issuance of the arrest warrant, according to Capulong.

The resolution was mailed on March 7, the same day the judge issued the arrest warrant, Capulong noted.

"I think that surreptitiously, the prosecutors filed the information and secured a warrant even before they decided to send us a copy of the resolution," the human rights lawyer said, referring to Vivero and his superior, whose name he could not recall.

Because he was notified of the warrant before he got a copy of the resolution, Ocampo, 67, "lost the legal remedy" to file a motion for reconsideration with the regional trial court in Leyte, according to Capulong.

Abuse of discretion

Ocampo and his lawyers are preparing to file in the Supreme Court a petition for certiorari and prohibition against the two prosecutors, the judge and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez for "grave abuse of discretion."

The filing of the certiorari and prohibition will be undertaken to show that Ocampo is the one initiating the "legal process" to clear his name, according to Capulong.

Rebuttal

Capulong said the filing of the petition had been delayed in the absence of court documents from the Leyte RTC.

He said messengers had been sent on Thursday to Hilongos, Leyte, to retrieve the complete set of certified true copies of documents from the Leyte court, which are necessary attachments to pursue the petition to be filed in the Supreme Court.

The messengers have yet to return to Manila. Hilongos is 146 kilometers from Ormoc City.

Capulong said he and other members of the defense team would have to refute the statements point by point.

He said the documents were probably retrieved from intelligence files and archived reports of the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. *With a report from Jeannette Andrade*

Supreme Court of the Philippines
Judicial and Bar Council
Manila

ANNOUNCEMENT

Pursuant to Section 1, Rules 7 of the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC-009), as amended, the public is hereby invited to the panel interview on March 27, 2007, at the Division Hearing Room, Ground Flr., New Supreme Court Building, of the following candidates for the position of **DEPUTY OMBUDSMAN FOR THE VISAYAS:**

9:00 AM - 12:00 NN

1. **ARELLANO**, Antonio B.
2. **ASERON**, Delio M.
3. **DELGADO**, Rey F.
4. **DUMDUM Jr.**, Simeon P.

2:00 - 5:00 PM

1. **LIM**, Guilljie D.
2. **NERI, Jr.**, Graciano B.
3. **SANTIAGO**, Virginia P.
4. **TANCO**, Carla Juris N.

The six other candidates, namely, APOSTOL, Pelagio S.; AVILA, Eusebio M.; CARANDANG, Melchor Arthur H.; DATOR, Roque Damian A.; DE LUNA, Ambrosio B.; LANTORIA, Jr., Gerardo B. were already interviewed by the JBC on June 16, July 26 & October 2, 2006.

The public may submit any sworn complaint, written report, or opposition against any of the aforesaid applicants NOT LATER THAN MARCH 23, 2007, to the JBC Secretariat, 2nd Flr., Centennial Bldg., Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Manila (Tel. No. 552-9512; Fax No. 552-9598; E-mail address: **jbc@supremecourt.gov.ph**; **jbc_supremecourt@yahoo.com.ph**).

March 12,2007.

MA. LUISA D. VILLARAMA
Clerk of Court
Ex Officio Secretary

(PDI - March 13, 2007)

'Brave hearts' celebrate life, love

From page A1

be the most difficult phase in their lives.

The brave hearts' families told stories of hope, courage and life after open heart surgery.

Unconditional love

At the first "Camp Braveheart for Little Heroes" at the La Mesa Eco Park on Feb. 25, participants, aged 8-15, did things that children their age love doing—they rowed a boat, played soccer, painted pictures, wrote poems, sang and danced.

SOME 50 children who have something in common—they had undergone heart surgery or suffered from heart ailment—attend camp for "brave hearts" at the La Mesa Eco Park.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO/ PHILIPPINE HEART ASSOCIATION

"It was wonderful to see children who have had heart surgery running about," said Dr. Cecilienne Sanchez-Acosta, a volunteer doctor of the Philippine Heart Association (PHA), which organized the camp.

"The camp showed that these children need not lead dull lives after surgery," she said.

The children's frail hearts, she added, continued to beat because of the unconditional love of their parents and the generous support of people and groups who pooled their resources to finance the surgeries of these children, most of whom come from indigent families.

Forty of the children who joined the camp were patients at the charity ward of the Philippine Heart Center. Ten were sponsored by the Children's Heart Foundation.

The CHF was formed by private individuals in response to an INQUIRER story in 1998 about Danica Jimeno of Baguio City, a girl suffering from a congenital heart disease.

Normal activities

Jimeno underwent surgery in the United States in 1999 when she was 3 years old. Now a Grade 5 pupil at the Saint Louis School Center in Baguio, she was also at the camp.

"I hope the other children will not lose hope and they will live life to the fullest," she said.

Volunteer doctors from the PHA, CHF and the Philippine Society of Pediatric Cardiology were glad to see their young patients engage in normal activities after surgery.

Acosta said children with congenital heart disease also need physical therapy and emotional and social rehabilitation.

Camp idea

Dr. Juliet Balderas, pediatric cardiologist and head of the PHA's Congenital Heart Disease Council, said bringing together these special children and their parents for a day of fun and learning would help in their recovery.

Balderas, Acosta and other PHA doctors volunteered their time, expertise and energy to teach and empower parents on how to care for their children and give them emotional and psychological support.

To fill these needs, the idea of a camp was born in September 2006.

Payback time

But the lack of funds, manpower and an organization to handle logistics gave the doctors a problem. Who would help them implement their plan?

They didn't have to wait long because support started pouring in.

"I'm ready. Count me in," said Stephanie Cabañes, whose son, Josemaria, has undergone two major operations since he was 13.

The boy was suffering from a rare heart ailment called antiphospholypid antibody syndrome, the first reported case in the country.

"How can we help?" asked CHF president Alex Go-Kianlin, whose 8-year-old daughter had two heart surgeries when she was an infant.

Cabañes, events coordinator of Parents for Education Foundation Inc. (Paref) Woodrose School, an exclusive school for girls in Alabang, Muntinlupa, agreed to design the program for the camp to pay back the kindness and support of the people who assisted and prayed for her son's recovery.

With her experience in organizing children's camps, she mobilized student and teacher volunteers from Woodrose who came up with various activities in which children could excel in the future such as drawing, writing, dancing, singing and sports.

One heart

Through the guidance of camp volunteers, the children composed a song, "With One Heart," which expressed their gratitude at being given another chance.

They performed the song before their proud parents, including actress Maricel Laxa-Pangilinan, whose son also underwent heart surgery.

"The heartwarming lyrics of the song created by the children brought tears to my eyes," said Cabañes, as she narrated to the parents how she, as a mother, overcame the difficulties that her son went through.

Josemaria, now 19, is a student at De La Salle University in Dasmariñas, Cavite, and is involved in community service.

He spoke to the children at the camp and encouraged them to follow their heart despite their condition.

Ples agreed. After he recovered from surgery, he returned to school, studied hard and became an honor student.

Making a difference

The CHF, which had sponsored the operation of Jimeno and other children from indigent families in Northern Luzon and Metro Manila, financed the training activities at the camp.

The foundation also hired a music therapy teacher, dance instructors and professional rowers who taught the children basic skills to help them develop a sense of optimism and goal-setting for the future.

While the children were busy with various activities prepared by their instructors, their parents attended lectures at a separate camp.

There was a lecture by Dr. Rhodora de Leon on understanding congenital heart disease and an inspirational talk by the parents of the brave hearts.

"Don't be afraid if your child will have to undergo an operation," said CHF's Kianlin. "[Surgery] was the best decision my wife and I made for our daughter."

Cabañes stressed the importance of the camp: "The fruition of Camp Braveheart is my signpost, pointing the way for others who, like myself, have had to find their way through a similar experience. Even if Camp Braveheart touched just one heart today, I believe it made a difference in that one heart."

Little heroes

Woodrose student Cristina Cuyegkeng, a Camp Braveheart volunteer, said she was inspired by 14-year-old Sarah Jane Ponce, who has Down Syndrome and needs heart surgery.

"She represents the little heroes who took the chance to experience new things. They faced their fears and found the courage to live life to the fullest despite their ill hearts," Cuyegkeng said.

Since Ponce could not perform physical activities, she recited a poem she herself wrote titled "Special Child."

Parents, doctors and other children were moved to tears and they gave her warm applause.

"I enjoyed the art activity and I was very happy to make new friends," Ponce said in a letter faxed to the INQUIRER. "But the best thing I learned was ... keep hoping, keep dreaming and keep living."

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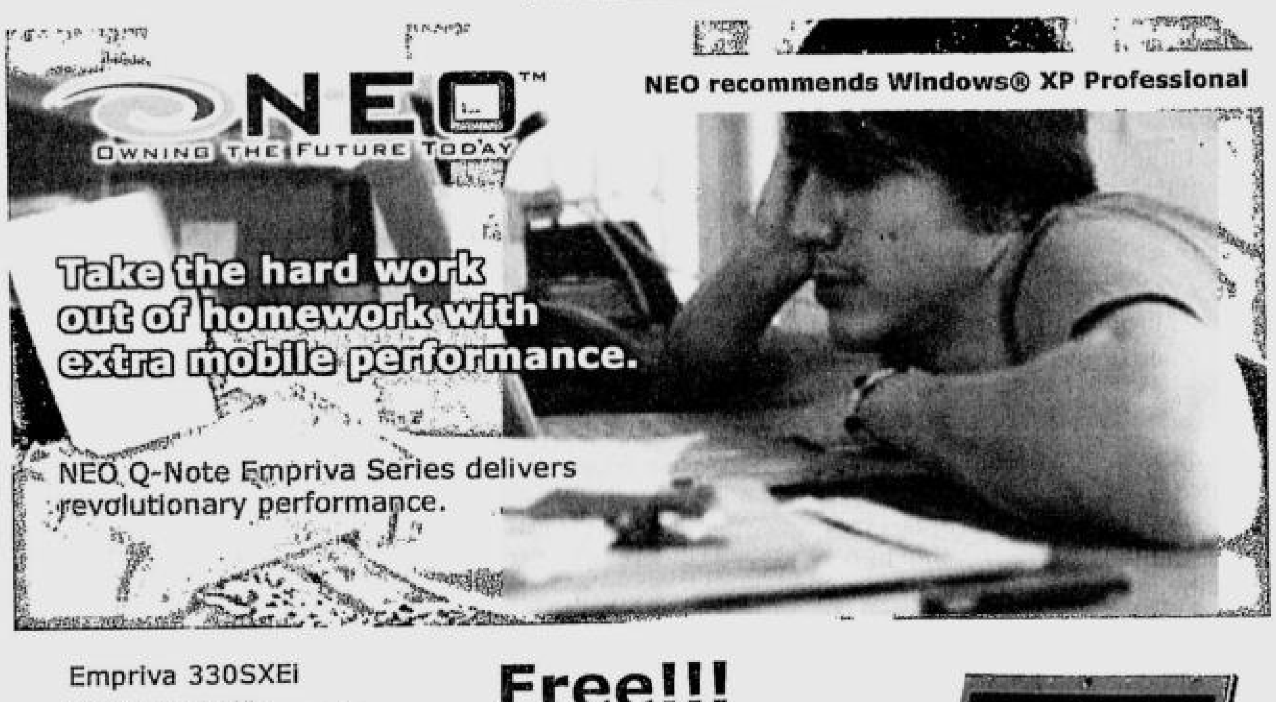

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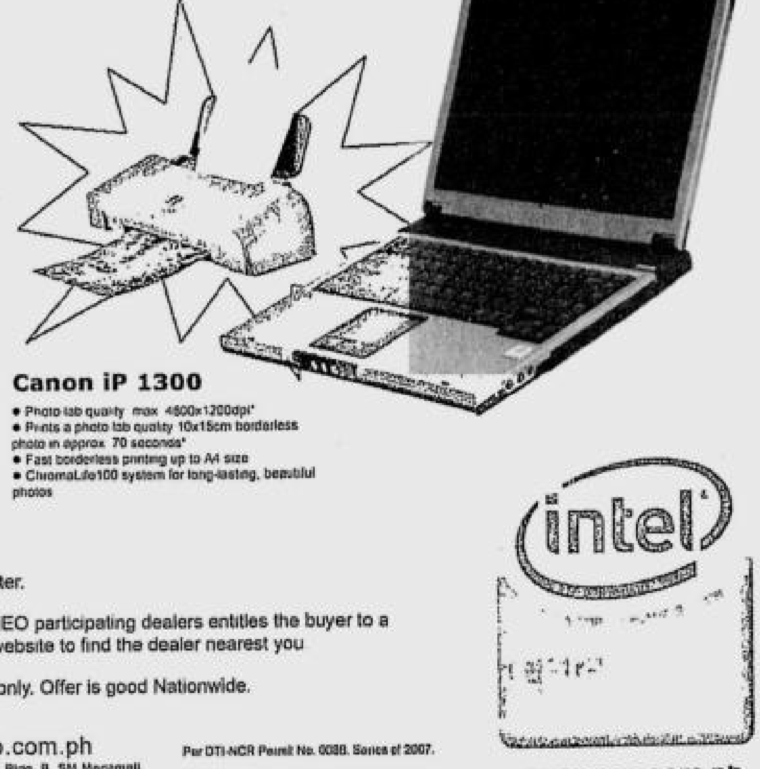

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Turning back the clock

EDITORIAL

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION AND ITS MILITARY arm appear determined to cripple the leftist party-list groups to prevent them from winning in the coming elections. That is the immediate objective. The long-range objective, it seems, is to make the leftist party-groups so powerless that they cannot mount any significant opposition to the administration.

This tactic emerged early during the first Arroyo administration. From the time Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo assumed the presidency in January 2001, 834 militants have been killed, victims of extrajudicial killing. That is by the militants' own count. The INQUIRER count places the total at 274. But whichever is the correct count, the killings are unacceptable in a civilized society that values human life and under an administration that has abolished judicial or court-imposed executions. Many of the victims in extrajudicial killings were members of leftist party-list groups, like Bayan Muna, Gabriela and Anakpawis .

The courts are also being used to immobilize the leftist party-list groups. About a year ago, Rep. Crispin Beltran of Anakpawis was arrested and jailed on suspicion of plotting to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo together with rebel soldiers, communist guerrillas and other lawmakers. Recently, Rep. Satur Ocampo of Bayan Muna was ordered arrested by a Southern Leyte court on charges of multiple murders allegedly committed 22 years ago. Ocampo asks how he could have committed the murders when he was under detention at that time, during the Marcos dictatorship. He also said that the law provides for the prescription of a charge of murder after 20 years.

More than a week ago, armed soldiers were reported prowling the streets of Barangay Commonwealth in Quezon City day and night, striking fear in the hearts of residents. Residents said the soldiers were seeking out members of militant party-list groups. Twenty-six other poor barangays were reportedly being patrolled by soldiers. Actually this has been going on since November and December, but it came to the attention of the media only recently.

Administration and military spokesperson gave varying explanations for the military presence. After objections were expressed in the media, the military ordered the soldiers to leave their long firearms behind and carry only hand guns. But the militarization of the barangays where party-list groups pursue their advocacies continues.

The Army has "invaded" not only poor barangays but also universities in Metro Manila. Raymond Palatino, president of the Kabataan party-list group, said that the deployment of troops in schools is intended to instill fear and intimidate student councils, publications and organizations that are critical of the administration and support progressive party-list groups and organizations.

Last Tuesday, the military was reported to be actively campaigning against leftist party-list groups. And recently, three supposed widows of ex-NPA members, wearing dark glasses and bandannas as hoods appeared before the Commission on Elections to seek the disqualification of Bayan Muna, Anakpawis and Gabriela. It is not surprising that Bayan Muna, Anakpawis and Gabriela are being targeted for "special treatment." A recent SWS survey showed that they are the three leading party-list groups.

A reform-minded Constitutional Commission in 1987 introduced the concept of the party-list into the Constitution. The rationale was to give representation to poor, marginalized and disadvantaged sectors in the House of Representatives which is largely made up of members of the economic, political and social elite. In the past 20 years, the party-list system has worked fairly well, and the party-list groups have pushed through progressive pieces of legislation such as the law prohibiting the imposition of the death penalty, the law appropriating P500 million for a standby fund for the repatriation, evacuation and relief of overseas workers and the law providing protection for children caught in conflict.

Now the Arroyo administration would set back the hands of the political clock, push back political progress and deny the poor and the disadvantaged representation in the House. In its single-minded effort to remain in power, it would stifle political dissent, criticism and opposition. It is militarizing politics, if it has not indeed imposed a de facto martial law. It is killing democratic pluralism and trying to bring about a regime where literally the unanimity of the graveyard will reign.

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'Is this sane?'

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

GIVEN PEOPLE'S POVERTY, INFLATED medicine prices and the pell-mell exodus of medical caregivers into cities and abroad, you'd think a warm welcome awaits medical missions by Filipino and foreign doctors.

Think again. From Emory University Hospital, in Atlanta, Georgia, pharmacist Patrick H. O'Brien tells of their Capiz experience. This was the ninth mission for O'Brien, who is married to a Filipina from Tagbilaran.

Capizenos' eyes grow moist when they speak of their Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas. By 2010, he could be ensconced in Malacañang, to revive the glory days of his grandfather, President Manuel Acuna Roxas. But the reality of Capiz today is one of mundane deprivation. Out of 77 provinces, it ranked only 41, says the Philippine Human Development Report.

The average life span for Capizenos is 64.5 years, almost five years shorter than that of Pampangeños but better than the 57 years for people in Lanao del Sur. The number of "no-read-no-writes" remains stubbornly high. Functional literacy is a less than overwhelming: 77 percent, behind Cavite's 93 percent. And out of every 100 Capizenos, 40 lack safe water sources.

Georgia Surgical Expeditions, therefore, gave priority to indigent Capizenos with a mission last month. "Locals" pitched in, from Gov. Vic Bermejo, the Gerry Roxas Foundation and the Rotary Club to the provincial hospital, O'Brien wrote. This backing made it possible for the mission to perform 93 major surgeries, plus hundreds of other treatments.

"One wishes the same could be said of the well-intentioned Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD)," O'Brien added. Equipped with a temporary Philippine Regulatory Commission license, he handled medicine logistics. It didn't take long to realize that BFAD regulations were antiquated, and implementation ham-handed.

Recent US Food and Drug Administration studies of US military multi-billion dollar medicine stockpiles, for example, found most drugs remain effective some even 15 years beyond their expiration dates. Harvard University's School of Medicine used such studies to update US physicians. But the BFAD remains in a time warp. It denies perfectly good medicine to poor patients with its obsolete rule of one-year expiry dates.

"Expiration dates are simply guidelines to be used. Medications are more affected by storage conditions than by a simple date," O'Brien noted. "The BFAD's rule may be appropriate for international pharmaceutical companies' imports. But it puts an enormous burden on medical mission donations that ... receive most of their donated drugs with a short expiration date."

For the Roxas City mission, the Georgia team accumulated medicines that were not expired. But prior to departure, they still lacked the BFAD's one-year dating clearance. "Efforts to contact the BFAD to arrange an inspection, by e-mail, regular mail and phone, all went unanswered," O'Brien said. "Maybe they were busy dreaming up other rules?"

"Upon the mission's arrival in Roxas City, on a Saturday, I was informed that the local BFAD agent would inspect our supplies," O'Brien continued. "Furthermore, they were not to be used until inspected. And finally, the inspection would be conducted on Monday." This would be the first day for surgeries. But as far as the BFAD was concerned, that was neither here nor there.

"Fine I'll be ready for inspection at 7 a.m. Monday morning," O'Brien replied. The BFAD instead set the inspection for 9 a.m,, which came and went. Then, they reset inspection for 10:30 a.m., which also came and went. The surgeries, meanwhile, proceeded. Finally, a BFAD team of three showed up—at 5:30 p.m.

"Their inspection took three hours," said O'Brien. "The check turned up only one ampoule of a test solution which was recently expired."

What was more significant was the copy of BFAD regulations the agent presented. It was 19 years old, being dated 1988. Nothing changed in between?

"In addition, I was verbally advised that medications to be used in missions must to be sent to Manila ahead of time," O'Brien added. There, it would be assayed by a BFAD that lacks scientists and is so laid-back it doesn't answer inquiries. Then, and only then, would they be released, "if found to be of sufficient potency."

"The BFAD agents and I were on a very friendly basis during the inspection," O'Brien wrote. "But I simply had to laugh about the sanity of that statement. Were we talking about our little five-day mission? I asked. Or the wholesale importation of medicines from India?"

Clearly, there's a critical need for well-meaning regulations to be consolidated, but also updated, O'Brien said. Indigent patients, who are served by these missions, deserve a drug agency that is abreast of today's medical advances. Foreign medical missions, especially those able to attract significant numbers of non-Filipino medical specialists, who serve without fees, should feel welcome at least.

"Currently there are mixed feeling among our members as to being welcomed by government officials," O'Brien wrote. "Heard of the plan, now being floated, supposedly from the Department of Health, to require a half-million-peso bond to be posted by foreign missions."

"Nomenklaturas or bureaucracies often atrophy into authoritarian strictures," United Nations University president Soedjatmoko once wrote. They embalm well-meaning objectives into rigid rules, with scant feel for human pain. And they quickly end up defeating the very purposes for which they were drafted.

The Sabbath was made for man, not vice versa. As the pharmacist put it to the obsolete rule-quoting BFAD inspector: "Is this sane?"

(E-mail: juanlmercado@gmail.com)

Outrage

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

FRANKLY, I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY WE'RE not incensed by the sight of soldiers armed to the teeth guarding the gates of schools while their superiors feel free to apprise students of their version of Truth, Justice and the GMA way. Or of Armalite-toting goons, in or out of uniform, surrounding the city's slums while their superiors feel free to press their point about the dangers of the germ called Bayan Muna, with not very veiled threats of what would happen to their audience if they do not heed their warnings.

The only thing I can attribute it to is grinding apathy or the notion that crimes like this are being committed only against a small group of people who probably deserve it. Either way, it's killing this country, in more ways than one. You're a fool if you think the killing of the soul is more tolerable that the killing of the body. The opposite is true. People whose souls are killed, or amputated, stop being people, they turn into zombies. Which we're fast becoming a nation of.

This crime isn't against them, it is against us. This isn't curbing communism, this is curtailing freedom. The military incursions into schools and the slums violate not just a whole slew of laws but the most basic principles of democracy. Principles this country has held—barring martial law, which all these are a throwback to—for as long as I can remember. Come to think of it, I don't recall schools being invaded by soldiers even during martial law.

The most basic of those principles is academic freedom. UP ferociously held on to that right throughout martial law, defying the dictatorship and successfully publishing the only real newspaper in this country, which was the Collegian. The presence of heavily armed soldiers on campuses is an outrage. The pen and the sword will never be able to coexist on campuses. There is only one power on campus (or ought to be) and that is the power of Idea.

Just as basic is the principle of non-interference by the military in elections. The law is clear: The military may not be partisan in any election. Any form of partisanship, or worse intervention other than to safeguard the ballots, constitutes electoral fraud. As it is, only last year the Comelec signed a memorandum of agreement with the AFP stipulating that it would no longer employ soldiers to even guard the ballots. I recall Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos crowing at the time that the agreement effectively put behind us the days of "Hello Garci," or the use of the military for electoral cheating.

Well, the military has not only not abided by that agreement it's gone past its "Hello Garci" function. It's now directly intimidating students and slum dwellers into not voting for the candidates it doesn't like. How else call the ranting of military officers and/or their assets while their armed bodyguards roam about to add to their powers of persuasion?

The arrest warrant against Ocampo was waiting to happen, and probably the only reason it didn't happen sooner was that the government was waiting to see how the public would react to the military invasion of schools and urban poor communities in the heart of the capital. The roar of silence in the face of that obscenity clinched it. All it takes for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing? All it takes for evil to triumph is for fools to embrace it.

It's what these things are being done for that makes them all the more outrageous. Ocampo hit the nail on the head when he said the arrest warrant on him is a move to scuttle the party-list system. It is, as is the military invasion of schools and slums. They are all of a piece. Bayan Muna is the leading party-list contender, as the SWS bears out, and it is the one group the military is targeting for political liquidation in the polls, quite apart from physical liquidation in the streets. Though the AFP's spokespersons have also been heard to speak out against Akbayan, Anakpawis and other left-leaning party-list groups. These are moves to scuttle a real party-list system, one where the voters are free to choose the representatives they want. That alone makes the military incursions into schools and slums a criminal violation of election laws.

It gives credence to the theory that Malacañang is more obsessed with the congressional contest than the senatorial one, Congress being the place where impeachment bids emanate from. Malacañang means to control Congress completely by hook or by crook—it has always shown a partiality to crook (and crooks)—and that applies as well to its party-list members. Ocampo's crime is not having anything to do with the effort to purge the communist movement of suspected spies, it is having much to do with the effort to purge this country of a proven usurper.

And still even more than that, what makes all this infuriating is that, as I wrote about yesterday, it's trying to sell the idea that these elections are about democracy vs. communism, when in fact, they are about democracy vs. dictatorship. Or, hell, that is too grand, when in fact they are about democracy vs. the cheaters. All these are being done to divert attention from the real issue in the elections. That is not the NPA, that is GMA. The NPA did not steal the vote in the last elections. Bayan Muna did not steal the vote in the last elections. The various left-leaning groups did not steal the vote in the last elections. GMA did.

If the schools and the slum areas need any special message from their protectors on how to protect democracy, it is not to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing but to beware of sheep rustlers in shepherds' clothing. It is not to beware of the strangers knocking at the gates but to beware of the Akyat Bahay gang lording it over inside.

When are we going to wake up and feel the knife on our throats?

Montano has tough time sans funds

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

GENUINE OPPOSITION SENATORIAL CANDIDATE Nikki Coseteng wants to limit her campaign spending to the relatively small amounts she spent in previous campaigns, arguing that she won't be able to justify to the public how she'd recover in the Senate the many millions expected to be spent by national candidates. On the other hand, top-rated actor and Team Unity senatorial candidate Cesar Montano is having a tough time campaigning without the funds promised him by the administration coalition, even though he's the most popular candidate in sorties. Instead of plugging himself, Montano tries to help his lesser known colleagues in the ticket at rallies, and this has won many points for him. But without funds, even a box-office star will have a hard time winning.

Reports also say some Pampangueños are in search of a better alternative than Gov. Mark Lapid or Lilia Pineda, both of whom are reputed to have plenty of campaign funds.

* * *

What all these tell us is that under our present system, few candidates can run for public office if they don't have enormous funding. Our election laws allow national candidates to spend P3.50 per voter. With 40 million registered voters, this comes up to P140 million, but in fact the candidates often end up spending more than P200 million.

The anomaly lies in the nature of the senatorial campaign. If the candidates were campaigning in just one region, they'd spend far less and they will be able to discuss issues with the people more effectively, instead of the five minutes given to each candidate which only allow as a song-and-dance act.

* * *

The prospect of spending less and discussing issues more intelligently could encourage more deserving and quality candidates to enter the political ring. The folly of over-spending and the circus atmosphere that our citizens find appalling could have been avoided if we had agreed to change the Constitution and shifted to parliamentary elections by district or region. Our system is hopeless for as long as we don't make that shift, but unfortunately, there are senatorial candidates who promise never to abolish the Senate even when its existence clearly has not made sense—and all because they want to make it their launching pad to the presidency.

* * *

One has to admire former Sen. Francisco Tatad for sticking out his neck on the issue of dynasty in the Senate, even though he'll doubtless reap opprobrium from the opposition as well as those who remember him reading the martial law proclamation. In ads last weekend, he asserted that GO candidates Aquilino Pimentel III and Alan Peter Cayetano cannot be expected to have a respectable career in lawmaking if they ignore the constitutional prohibition against political dynasties and choose to sit next to their father and sister, respectively. I don't think we can expect much from Cayetano, who has proved that he can maintain with a straight face the lie about Mike Arroyo's bank account in a German bank, even when its highest officials have testified that no one among the Arroyos has maintained an account over the past 10 years. But it's young Pimentel who really breaks our hearts, as he has been quoted as saying that he will introduce an enabling law against dynasties once he gets to the Senate, never mind if he and his father seek to start one right there.

* * *

Former Senate President Jovito Salonga called to correct an assertion here that he had authored the bill prohibiting political dynasties. He said it was filed during his term as Senate president by former Sen. Teofisto Guingona, but was watered down so much that it was practically toothless. And of course, the counterpart bill in the House got nowhere. Salonga said the framers of the 1987 Constitution should have made the prohibition against dynasties more explicit, instead of relying on Congress to pass an enabling law.

Sec. 2, Art. 26 states, "The State shall guarantee equal access to opportunities for public service, and prohibit political dynasties as may be defined by law." Truly, it was quite naïve of the framers of the charter to think that Congress would legislate against its own interests. As it is, the absence of an enabling law is being used by ambitious young opposition politicians as an excuse to join their relatives in the Senate. But as Tatad argued, "The absence of a law does not justify behavior that would be surely prohibited, if the law existed... Far from diminishing the constitutional mandate ... the failure of Congress to enact the enabling law only sharpens the obligation of those who sit or want to sit in Congress to respect that mandate, rather than exploit the absence of an enabling law for their own personal advance."

That ought to be addressed directly to Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

* * *

On this score, there are pluses and minuses. Reports say younger presidential son Diosdado "Dato" Arroyo will definitely run for Congress for the Camarines Sur seat vacated by Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya. Which means the First Family is cementing its own dynasty and two brothers Arroyo and an uncle would sit side by side in the House. How beautiful it would be if the First Family were to announce that following the spirit of the Constitution, Dato will not run this May. There is still time for him to change his plans and this would enable the First Family to seize the moral high ground on this issue.

In this connection, I'm glad Gina de Venecia heeded the pleas of many friends not to run for the Senate, as others had suggested. Obviously she was tempted at first as she has a national network and leadership ability, but she finally decided to just help JDV in his campaign for a third and last term in the House and the coming fight for the speakership. Should fate smile on him again, it will be JDV's fifth term as speaker, making him the longest-sitting House chief. Gina, who is only 58, can run for the Senate in 2010, and she'll make a good senator.

Condoms and choices

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

HIV/AIDS HAS ALREADY BEEN RECOGNIZED as a woman's issue. More women than men are getting infected with HIV, and this is mainly because women, due to biology as well as culture and social status that influence their sexual behavior and decision-making power, are more vulnerable to sexually-transmitted infections.

But why is it that, despite more than 20 years' research into and development of prevention strategies against HIV/AIDS, the number of new infections among women—and deaths, as well—continues to rise? An article in the December 2006 issue of International Family Planning Perspectives argues that part of the reason may be that strategies have not been attuned enough to the realities of women's lives and situation, and that, ironically enough, too much emphasis has been placed on the use of the male condom as the "most effective" means of protecting oneself from HIV/AIDS infection.

Erica Gollub, a professor of epidemiology, asserts that "successful HIV prevention work among women means the adoption of a woman-centered paradigm, one that is grounded in women's realities and acknowledges gender roles and gender-based power differentials as critical factors in women's ability to make and effect decisions regarding their health and welfare."

Years of research have also shown that "most women around the world cannot control male condom use," says Gollub, "and we have begun to understand that women's attitudes toward and use of protective methods are based on personal, relational, sociocultural and structural factors, with a different mix for each woman."

* * *

INDEED, because condoms need to be put on by men—and it would be difficult to get a man to use a condom without his knowledge or consent—Gollub notes that "we have now recognized the limits of a sole dependence on the male condom." She says: "Male control over the male condom undermines its real-world impact."

Despite decades of work touting the advantages of the condom—and it is a very effective means of preventing sexually transmitted infections—"large-scale male condom campaigns ... have been inadequate as a public health strategy." Gollub notes that "recent studies of US women at high HIV risk show that the proportion of protected sex acts rarely exceeds 15 percent, a statistic that has not changed over the past decade. Women in developing countries are often not protected at all."

She adds: "Our stubborn insistence on presenting the male condom as a '100 percent method' has played right into the hands of those who argue that advocating male condom use to prevent HIV infection under-serves women because it exposes them to (occasional) failures and does not make the most of women's 'power' in saying no to sex."

"We have seen the credibility of the male condom damaged over the past several years by disinformation campaigns, and the language of reproductive rights twisted to disempower women," recounts Gollub. "Precious resources that could have been used for prevention are now being wasted in countering these attacks. Future HIV prevention efforts should focus on the potential for a given method program or policy to increase a woman's ability to control her reproductive health, rather than on product efficacy values that apply to a narrow set of users under highly manipulated conditions."

* * *

THERE are other, women-controlled "technologies" that offer protection against HIV, including the female condom which is considered to be as effective as the male condom. And while spermicides, which had been looked upon as a promising alternative but have proven to be useless against HIV transmission, Gollub says cervical barriers "hold great promise as risk-reduction tools," mainly because the cervix is more susceptible to HIV infection than the vagina. There is an ongoing large trial to test the effectiveness of a "one-size-fits-many diaphragm." Clinical trials of microbicides are likewise underway.

"Widening our approach to include more than the exclusive promotion of the male condom," says Gollub, "means grasping the essential notion that no prevention method will ever be ideal for all women or in all situations."

She asserts: "We are still wrestling with the outdated question of 'which is better?' rather than the considerably more constructive and expedient framework of 'more is better.'"

Gollub says a more efficient next step would be to adopt a "sexual risk reduction" philosophy, "similar to that of the harm-reduction approach to needle-related HIV risk among injection drug users."

Such an approach, she suggests, involves giving women choices when it comes to prevention methods—behavioral (such as reducing the number of partners), product-based (such as alternatives to the male condom) or both—to maximize prevention potential.

* * *

"SOMETHING is better than nothing," Gollub declares.

While other methods and approaches may not be as effective as the condom against HIV, they "could nevertheless have great individual or public health value if they were used consistently."

In New York, for instance, the State AIDS Institute has "advocated a hierarchical counseling approach that presents available methods that have the potential to reduce STIs and HIV infection, ordered by their efficacy." Such a hierarchy, suggests Gollub, "might place female and male condoms at the top rung, diaphragms and cervical caps on the second rung, and coitus interruptus on the third rung."

Will giving women choices and acknowledging their power to make those choices finally give them the protection they need against HIV infection? What will it take to put HIV prevention in the hands of women—and not just on the penises of their partners? More on these questions in tomorrow's column.

A journey among mentors

COMMENTARY

Soledad C. Francisco and Evelyn A. Mejillano

> As they begin to make sense of their realities, they also begin to realize the gap between what is real and what is ideal

THE WORD "REVOLUTION" COMMONLY DEscribes a dramatic upheaval. Modern societies have at one time or another gone through their own revolutions. Some, like those in France and Russia, were marked by bloodshed. Others, like the Industrial Revolution, had an impact of global proportions. Many people feel that our very own Edsa Revolution of 1986 was nothing short of a miracle because social change was ushered in peacefully.

Revolution also means conversion, or a change of heart. This is the spirit of the Foundation for Worldwide People Power's Education Revolution. Our advocacy calls for peaceful social change through our education system.

Sol Francisco and I, together with a small group of really dedicated educators, run the Mentoring the Mentors program nationwide. We have been quite successful in our scale-up operations, despite being few, because the FWWPP has been able to forge working partnerships with government and non-government organizations who share our belief that education—quality education—is the most viable long-term option we have to alleviate poverty.

We have practically been all over the country. Most recently, we conducted Mentoring the Mentors sessions for the Department of Education's Agusan del Norte schools division through the initiative of Dr. Jesusita Arteche, regional director, and Dr. Ponciano Q. Joven, division superintendent.

It is difficult to describe exactly what Mentoring the Mentors is all about because it affects those who have experienced it on different levels.

Norhattah C. David, a public school teacher from the Lanao del Norte schools division, says that "the Mentoring the Mentors Program has helped us establish a mechanism where we could discuss work-related issues and concerns. In doing so, we were able to live up to our roles as instructional leaders."

A school administrator from Bukidnon said that the Mentoring the Mentors session she went through helped her become effective in her work and more tolerant in her interpersonal relationships. "We bend, rather than break," she added.

Invariably, our participants say that joining a Mentoring the Mentors session is like going on a journey.

Our sessions are shared with the participants through multi-media modules on a DVD. The program content is a set of personalized activities designed to help reinforce the concepts and principles discussed in the DVD.

This approach helps establish the connection between our facilitators and the participants. It never ceases to amaze me that our sessions become personal learning opportunities for both the participants and their facilitators.

Our facilitators endeavor to provide the participants with a clear grasp of both the content and the context of our advocacy. Through interactive, participatory tasks, every group describes the reality they see in their own communities and in the country at large. As they begin to make sense of their realities, they also begin to realize the gap between what is real and what is ideal. At this point, their mission as educators leaps out in stark definition.

This back-and-forth process encourages the participant teacher to conceptualize and formulate her personal education philosophy. Every session creates opportunities for leadership and fellowship. Our objective is simple: to help teachers focus their energies toward improving all aspects of learning, from reading to critical thinking.

We go through rigorous active teaching and learning strategies, but we always emphasize that learning can and should be fun.

Our sessions are a laboratory where theories and principles of mentoring are put to practice, where participants deal with actual problems and real world solutions.

Nancy is a secondary school principal in Bukidnon. She says, "Mentoring the Mentors helped us learn more about ourselves, our values and virtues, our failings and shortcomings. We learned what it is like to be a true teacher, a mentor."

Soledad Francisco is a retired professor from University of the Philippines in Diliman and a member of the Mentoring the Mentors facilitation team. Dr. Evelyn Mejillano is the FWWPP's Mentoring the Mentors national coordinator.

To limp or to fly?

YOUNG BLOOD

Tina Papera

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

"HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO TAKE A BATH?"

I don't know how many times that question has been asked the past several days and I wish I have counted them. Then I would have known which is more important to other people, how to a take bath or how to fit into my usual tight pants, given my "situation."

Ever since the accident, my life has taken a different turn. No, the accident was not life-threatening at all, or at least that was what those who saw it have told me. Things just suddenly felt heavier, and a little more difficult. Sometimes there are incidents, or unwanted events that make you rethink your entire existence. This was one of them.

No day could be more vivid in my memory than that day. I woke up feeling as if the whole world was at my feet. The New Year had given me signs that I was starting on the right foot. I was given the opportunity that I have been hoping for for some time. I had my whole week planned out; a few adjustments here and there on my list of to-dos and I'd just be breezing through the days. I was starting that Wednesday morning just like any other rare positive day.

I was alone and on my way to work. Just a few blocks away from our house, I got off the tricycle and started walking briskly toward where I would catch a jeepney. I was halfway across, when the thing hit me.

My life stopped very briefly—some 10 seconds or so. When I became conscious, I felt like a 50-pound brick had fallen on my left leg. I could not move it. Either my nerves had turned numb or the pain was just too much that I could not tell what I was feeling. I was already crying when it occurred to me that I had been hit by a speeding motorcycle.

My knee was bleeding. A patch of denim was ripped from one knee. Everyone around was probably stunned because it took them a few minutes to move to help a girl who was lying face down on the service road in Parañaque, with one leg immobilized.

One tricycle driver called another to help pull me off the road and bring me to the nearest hospital, just a few meters away from where we were.

I was almost hysterical. The last thing I wanted was to be moved, which was sheer torture. The trip to the hospital was the longest five minutes of my life.

As I was being brought to the hospital, I heard that the rider who had hit me was helping carry me there. I wished I could lay my hands on something to throw at him. But my arms kept rubbing my leg, and my mind just wandered.

As I type this, I am trying my best not to think about how itchy it feels inside my plaster cast. My foot is sending signals to my brain that only a small amount of blood is flowing underneath it.

The doctor told me it would take only a month before my leg can breathe and I can walk, dance and run again. But for now, a month is like forever.

I reported to work one day, but my boss advised me to take a leave, get some rest and recover. I told her that being unable to work, and having more moments to ponder the pain of being temporarily crippled would kill me.

I am getting used to the jeers of colleagues who think the way I walk is funny. The more immature ones even imitate me, and walk like an amputee. And yes, almost everyone has asked me how I manage to bathe myself.

An even more impertinent question thrown at me was: How could you have sex with a cast? My simple answer to the stupid question: If there's a will, there's a way.

I was never asked how all this has affected me. Or maybe even changed me. Nevertheless, I would say I have been humbled by it.

Up until now, my family is still searching for the rider who hit me because he disappeared after I was transferred to San Juan De Dios Hospital. But I have resigned myself to the fact that we would not find him. I know God sees everything and that He saw what happened. If the guy would not be able to pay for the hospital bills, so be it. Every night I thank the Lord that I am still alive. I got my second chance to make a difference.

Isn't the fact that I will get to use my leg again just grand? During the first few days when I was in pain, physically and emotionally, I complained and sulked over my misfortune.

But now, I know He allow things to happen for a reason. I don't have my own car or driver to bring or fetch me to and from work. I have to endure the agonizing journey, feeling every bump below my foot, getting flashes of what happened, dreading the sight of motorcycles and hearing again the crashing sound. But I try to be strong. I tell myself that while I may be stable on just one foot now, God is holding me up on the other.

A few days ago, the management honored me with an award. It was the first award given for the year. It was called "Wowing Passion Award." We are a service company and one of the virtues we value most is passion.

Before the award was handed out to me, our HR manager said it was being given to someone who had become an inspiration to others in our workplace. He said my example showed that no one has a valid reason to feel exhausted or incapable of doing things.

I think God never gives us trials that we cannot overcome. When we are crippled, it is up to us whether to limp or to fly.

Tina Papera, 27, is a store marketing manager for Shakey's.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Best time to run

"When should I run for office, when I am already a has-been? Who will believe in me? If I run now, I have the advantage because I am very popular."

—Manny Pacquiao on his bid to represent the first district of South Cotabato in Congress

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Joker act explains youth apathy to Edsa glory

I THOUGHT ISAGANI CRUZ AND ASUNcion David-Maramba were joking when they defended Joker Arroyo's decision to stay with Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's coalition, despite her regime's tyrannical inclinations and malevolent schemes. (INQUIRER, 2/25/07)

Joker became the world's worst and probably oldest joker when he opted to be part of GMA's senatorial slate. I vividly recall his eloquent plea for the senator-jurors to impeach Joseph Estrada in December 2000: "We cannot have our country run by a thief." Estrada is still under trial for his alleged plunder of the people's treasury, but everybody knows the Bolante fertilizer scam, Jose Pidal controversy, road user's tax misuse, etc. And we cannot forget "Hello Garci," which exposed the operation that robbed Fernando Poe Jr. of the presidency and the people of genuine democracy. How could a rabid anti-thief crusader swallow his words and embrace a coalition dedicated to tyranny, cheating and malevolence? Or has Joker suddenly come to a new awakening, a new belief that GMA didn't cheat and didn't rob us a cent?

Some say men become wise as they grow old. That seems to be not Joker's way.

Joker's somersault explains why young people like me have lost some love for celebrating Edsa. Why celebrate Edsa when its heroes have embraced a new and more vicious tyranny. Joker was a staunch human rights crusader during the martial law years. I just can't understand why he chose to stick with GMA, under whose watch more than 800 activists have been murdered, not to mention the dozens more forcibly "disappeared." He reasoned out that he had no choice but to be with GMA since the opposition had done nothing but try to impeach her, while failing to condemn the destabilizers in its ranks. Why condemn those who destabilize a corrupt and tyrranical regime, which in the first place didn't even win the 2004 presidential elections? Destabilizing a tyrannical regime is not only the right thing to do, it is a duty of every Filipino. That's what Edsa I and II were all about.

Cruz said Joker could stay independent after all these? It's like saying that you could still go to heaven even if you have already sold yourself and your soul to the devil.

Maramba said that maybe Joker chose to be pragmatic when he sided with GMA. In other words, Joker was only forced to join Gloria to ensure his victory in the elections. Well, Joker can win more easily as an independent. If Joker were the "people's dragon," we might as well summon Saint George.

—DAVID MICHAEL M. SAN JUAN
dmsanjuanMM3@yahoo.com

SENATORS belonging to the Liberal Party proclaim Noynoy as a senatorial candidate.

Noynoy Aquino living up to legacy of Ninoy, Cory

THIS REFERS TO THE NEWS STORY "Aquino name not enough to win, Noynoy told." (INQUIRER, 3/7/07) The report carried Rep. Prospero Pichay's tirade against Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino's endorsement of Liberal Party Sen. Mar Roxas as a possible presidential candidate in the 2010 election.

Pichay sought to give Noynoy unsolicited advice on the Aquino name and his Senate candidacy. Truth to tell, Noynoy is aware of the awesome responsibility of living up to the good name that has been richly endowed by the martyrdom of his father and the legacy of his mother's presidency.

We agree with Pichay that the Aquino name is giving Noynoy tremendous advantage in this campaign. Unlike others, Noynoy does not have to spend a scandalous amount of money on TV ads to gain name recall. In fact, he is overwhelmed by the public goodwill earned by his parents. Apparently, many Filipinos share the Aquinos' advocacy for a functioning democracy.

Noynoy's public service record can speak for itself. It is one characterized by his advocacy for good government, public accountability and liberal democracy. He believes that a working democracy translates to the well-being of the people. It is this ideal we share in the Liberal Party.

By the way, we in the LP are not pushing for Senator Roxas as just another popular personality. We are pushing him as a symbol of principled politics and platform of government based on a defined political philosophy.

—FLORENCIO "BUTCH" ABAD,
campaign manager,
Liberal Party

Sacking of Baja cost RP plenty

THE PHILIPPINES LOST AN IMPORTANT post in the United Nations after Ambassador Lauro Baja, the country's permanent representative to the UN was recalled and replaced by former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr.

Baja was replaced as vice president of the Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc), a major organ of the UN, by Ambassador Kenzo Oshima, Japan's permanent representative to the UN.

Reports from New York quoted Ambassador Dalius Cekaulis of Lithuania, the current Ecosoc president, expressing his "extreme regret" over Baja's recall.

Even Filipinos working in the UN, led by Jessie Rose Mabutas, the highest-ranking Filipino in the UN, were "aghast that the leadership in the Department of Foreign Affairs failed to appreciate the strategic position of the Philippines in the UN."

Also, Vivian Cruz, vice president of the Philippine Cultural Society in the UN, said that the loss of the Ecosoc vice-presidency sends the wrong signal and will erode the goodwill and respect the Philippines gained over the last four years. (INQUIRER, 2/26/07)

At home, officials and employees of the DFA were disappointed over the replacement of career diplomat Baja with 71-year-old retired Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., an outsider.

Out of delicadeza, Davide should not have sought the post of Baja. The appointment of Davide by President Macapagal-Arroyo is a blatant violation of RA 7157, the Foreign Service Act of 1991, which provides, among other things, that the appointee-ambassador must not be over 60 years old.

Moreover, around 60 congressmen passed Resolution No. 7707, which was sent to Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo, stopping the appointment of Davide, but to no avail. Davide flew to New York without the confirmation of the Commission on Appointments.

—ELIGIO M. PASTORIN,
Rositaville Subdivision,
Concepcion I, Marikina City

Sabio clarifies PCGG allowances

I WOULD LIKE TO CORRECT THE NEWS story, written by Jerry Esplanada, which reported that "Sabio clarified he had 'not received any allowance or any compensation' from the firms." (INQUIRER, 3/1/07)

What I said in my press conference last Feb. 28, 2007 was: "I have not received any allowance and/or any compensation **violative** of the policies laid down by Memorandum Circular of the President No. 40 issued on 05 April 1993, No. 66 issued on 24 August 1993 and No. 175 issued on 11 March 1998."

—CAMILO L. SABIO,
chair,
Presidential Commission
on Good Government,
82 Edsa, Mandaluyong City

Family planning does not win or lose votes

WE WERE UTTERLY DISAPPOINTED with the way Antonio J. Montalvan II treated the Filipino voting public with his recent article titled "Pro-life, pro-death list." (INQUIRER, 2/26/07) It was equally disappointing to hear a historian of his stature stooping so low to hurl unfounded accusations at legislators who are promoting better quality of life for Filipinos.

Modern technology has afforded us various conveniences, including easy access to various sources of information. It will not hurt to check the content of House Bills 3773 and 5285 for anything that has to do or is remotely related to euthanasia, abortion and divorce. The findings of a Pulse Asia survey showing the increasing number of Filipinos (69 to 82 percent) supportive of candidates favoring "free choice" of family planning methods for couples are also accessible to the public. The survey also show an 11-percent increase in the number of Filipinos who said they would support candidates favoring a law or measure on family planning (71 percent in 2000 compared to 82 percent in 2004); and a 6-percent increase among those who said they would support candidates favoring a government budget for family planning (from 74 to 80 percent). Similarly, the Family Planning Survey (FPS) and the 2003 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS), both conducted by the National Statistics Office, show that only half of married women are able to plan their families due to lack of information and proper knowledge on the various family planning methods. Filipinas, especially among the ranks of the poor, also bear more children than they desire, and they encounter difficulties in spacing their births.

The results of the 2004 elections have also proven that the inclusion of reproductive health and family planning in a candidate's platform does not work against a candidate's chances of winning, as all the national and local candidates who carried these issues gained fresh mandates from their constituents. Some of the re-elected legislators Montalvan mentioned in his column have consistently supported population and reproductive health initiatives. They include Representatives Josefina Joson, Nereus Acosta, Gilbert Remulla, Loretta Ann Rosales, Lorna Silverio, Ana Theresia Hontiveros-Baraquel, Mario Joyo Aguja, Darlene Antonino-Custodio, Emilio Macias, Jose Carlos Lacson, Nerissa Soon-Ruiz and Renato Magtubo.

Our vote is our right and our power. We urge the Filipino voting public to exercise this right and power with much caution. Know your candidates well. Do not wholly rely on unsolicited advice given by people with limited views and dark-age mentality.

—ELY DE LEON,
information officer,
Philippine Legislators' Committee
on Population and Development
(PLCPD), Diliman, Quezon City

GSIS should publish notice of suspension of pension

WITH HIS GSIS eCARD, MY HUSBAND Godofredo O. Peteza, a pensioner, went to the nearest DBP ATM to withdraw his pension for the month of March 2007. Finding no pension, he went to the satellite office of the GSIS, which is located at the back of the capitol building, where he saw countless other pensioners and other beneficiaries who had not yet received their monthly pensions for three months—since January 2007. It was a pitiful sight: most of them were sickly and walked with the aid of canes, yet they were deprived of the only means with which to buy the maintenance medicines prescribed by their doctors.

Why can't the GSIS publish notices (in a newspaper of nationwide circulation) informing the pensioners or survivors that their pensions will be suspended unless they complied with requirements? Did it not occur in the minds of the GSIS people that suspending the pensions even for a day can cause the pensioners or their beneficiaries untold sufferings if not death from illness or hunger?

We ask GSIS President Winston Garcia to be kind to the pensioners who are now in the twilight of their lives and who are only collecting what they had saved for years in the GSIS, during their faithful service to the government.

—TRINIDAD ESTURAS PETEZA,
JP Rizal Street,
Barangay Camambugan,
Daet, Camarines Norte 4600

Will there be peace after the terrorists are gone?

COMMENTARY

David Gorman and Michael Vatikiotis

GENEVA—THERE HAS BEEN MUCH TRUMpeting about the recent successes in tracking down and eliminating key leaders of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Southern Philippines. The killing of significant Abu Sayyaf members in the past two months has been hailed as evidence that the tide against dangerous terrorists is turning in the region. Less attention has been paid though to the impact of these operations on the broader context of peace-building in the troubled Southern Philippines.

Sustainable peace between Mindanao's four million Muslims, their Christian neighbors and the central government in Manila remains elusive. Like the situation in modern Somalia and Afghanistan, this part of Southern Philippines, especially the Sulu island chain which harbors the Abu Sayyaf, is a patchwork of contending clans, insurgents and splinter groups which have been mired in conflict for decades. The so-called terror experts would have us believe that taking out a few bad guys and building new roads and schools is the path to peace and stability.

But sustainable peace will only be achieved by working hard to sustain existing peace agreements and framing new ones. The decade-old peace agreement between the Moro National Liberation Movement (MNLF) has not delivered the peace many hoped. The ongoing Malaysian-brokered peace process with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has yet to be concluded.

All of this predates the war on terror and it would now be naïve to assume that increasing body counts of dead terrorists indicate progress in bringing peace to Mindanao. A closer examination of events, as they have unfolded since the beginning of the year, portrays the kaleidoscope of conflicts that exist and the challenges of bringing peace to the region and ending the war on terror.

After several months of stepped up operations to eliminate the ASG, including operatives of the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) began to make significant progress in neutralizing their leadership. In early January, it was widely reported that seven ASG operatives were killed while leading a kidnapping expedition. Shortly, thereafter, senior ASG leaders Binang Sali and Abu Solaiman were "neutralized" and the killing of ASG chief Khaddafy Janjalani was confirmed. Although, the campaign has largely gone without any collateral damage to civilian or MNLF forces, on Jan. 18 what was not widely reported was that nine people, including MNLF members and civilians, as well as three Marines, were killed in a clash near a village called Timpuuk in Sulu.

Such "misencounters" with MNLF forces have generated a sense of uncertainty in Sulu, and fears that the campaign against ASG could spiral into armed conflict between the government and the MNLF. The Timpuuk incident revealed the fragile state of the 1996 peace treaty and the arrangement of "no confrontation" between the MNLF and AFP. Indeed, just days after the AFP claimed success over the ASG, followed by a high-profile visit to Sulu by US Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy Karen Hughes, two ranking Philippine officials, including a Marine general, were held captive by the MNLF for two days which demanded a review of the 1996 agreement and the release from house detention of their leader, MNLF Chair Nur Misuari.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has promised to step up development efforts in Sulu while the AFP maintains pressure on the ASG and hopes to eliminate the Indonesian terrorists. Meanwhile violence continues to be endemic to Sulu, where personal grudges are often settled with guns, and military and guerrilla forces trade artillery and rocket fire at the slightest provocation. MNLF and AFP troops remain in a standoff, and levels of violence are expected to rise as national elections scheduled for May draw closer.

Unfortunately, the endemic violence which plagues Sulu and the need for long-term solutions as opposed to quick headline grabbing fixes gets buried in the rubble. The MNLF has been around for 35 years, the MILF and other splinter groups for 30 and the ASG for 20. Will they be around in another 10 years?

Fortunately, there are sustained efforts behind the scenes to bring closure to this long and debilitating conflict that has killed more than 150,000 since the 1960s. The Sulu Peace Working Group, supported by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and composed of 10 individuals from Sulu from all sectors of society including the police, military, judiciary, the insurgent group, and others is one more effort. Working jointly with all parties to keep a lid on the violence but also to identify and facilitate longer term solutions, their efforts will not make the headline news but they will make the difference in the longer term.

David Gorman is mediation advisor and Michael Vatikiotis is regional representative of the Geneva-Based Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.

Non-political, non-partisan assistance to veterans' causes always welcome

I RESPOND TO THE LETTER OF Godofredo O. Peteza of the Veterans Federation of the Philippines, Camarines Norte. (INQUIRER, 3/2/07)

I thank him for his kind words about my late father, Col. Terry Magtanggol Adevoso, specifically, about the service the latter rendered to his fellow veterans during his lifetime. I also thank Peteza for his concern over the non-passage of bills HB 5380 and SB 2241 (filed in the 13th Congress) which sought to provide mechanisms to fund RA 7696 and the 12-year unpaid administrative disability pensions of veterans past their 70th birthdays.

I consider all veterans' issues today to be non-political and non-partisan in nature. When the veterans fought against the common enemy during World War II and thereafter, shedding their blood and youth in the process, they were not asked what their political affiliations were, and these played no part in their heroic efforts for our country. Their politics had no hand in their willingness to give their all to their countrymen, for the good of this country. Thus, their issues today should not be tainted or tinged with any political color whatsoever. Veterans, as one sector, must be united in order to succeed in all their campaigns for truth and justice.

I can therefore honestly say to Peteza that I made no insinuation in my letter (INQUIRER, 2/14/07) that veterans should vote one way or the other in order for them to finally get their arrears in administrative disability pensions. The fact is that while these arrears have accumulated to P21 billion counting from 1994, it was only the Arroyo administration that took actual, positive, first steps to try to get Congress to solve this problem. That is why House Bill 5380 and Senate Bill 2241 were filed; why President Arroyo released P1 billion in 1996 to partially pay other categories of arrears in veterans benefits; and why Congress approved in 2006 an additional supplementary budget of P5 billion for the payment of arrears to World War II veterans, AFP retirees and PC-PNP retirees. The 15-year accumulation of P42-billion arrears in total veterans benefits as of year-end 2005 was reduced to P37 billion at the end of 2006.

Whether those in government are pro-administration or not, we in the veterans sector must and will always seek, in a non-political, non-partisan and bipartisan manner, presidential and congressional help to obtain full and final payment of all arrears in veterans benefits.

—JESUS TERRY FERRER ADEVOSO,
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for Veterans Affairs,
Office of the President,
Malacañang, Manila

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Bayan Muna member slain in Misamis

DAVAO CITY—A MEMber of the party-list group Bayan Muna was shot dead in front of her family in Sitio Nabuolan, Barangay Guinalaban in Salay town in Misamis Oriental on Saturday afternoon.

The victim, Siche Bustamante-Gandinao, 56, was also a member of the farmers group Misamis Oriental Farmers Association (Mofa).

Gandinao was one of the witnesses who shared their experiences and knowledge of extrajudicial killings in the country during the visit of Phillip Alston, United Nations special rapporteur on extrajudicial and summary executions.

Gandinao testified on the killing of her father-in-law, Dalmacio "Tatay Daki" Gandinao.

The latest attack took place just a few meters from a military detachment.

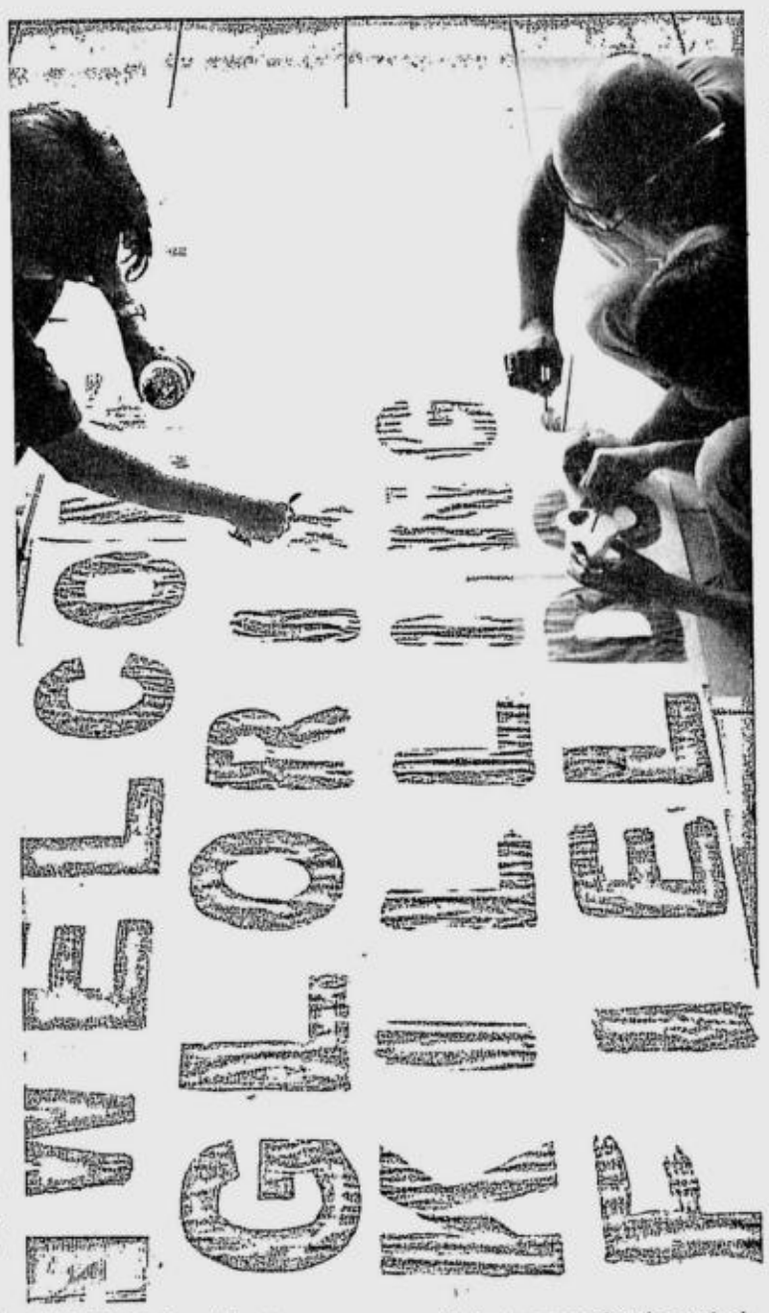
A fact sheet prepared by lawyer Beverly Musni, chairperson of the Karapatan-Northern Mindanao, said that Gandinao was shot while she and her husband and children were walking home from their farm. The gunman was on board a motorcycle.

Elda, the victim's daughter, saw the assailant tailing them after they passed by the detachment, the human rights group said.

The assailant, Karapatan said, overtook the victim and suddenly turned back and shot Gandinao, hitting her in the chest.

The report said the assailant quickly left the scene and headed for the detachment.

"Anselmito picked up the bloodied Siche while Elda continued shouting for help. Many residents nearby heard her cries for help, including the barangay chair and barangay kagawad of Barangay Guinalaban. Nobody responded. All that the barangay chair did was to call for a patrol car but said it could not be dispatched as this had been assigned elsewhere," the report said.



MEMBERS of a militant group prepare their streamer for the arrival of the United Nations team, led by Phillip Alston, special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions. JOAN BONDOC

"Then they saw a motorcycle approaching from a distance loaded with two males. Elda (the victim's daughter) again shouted and asked that they transport her mother to the nearby hospital. The two men did not mind Elda and proceeded toward the detachment. Later, the motorcycle came back, together with the motorcycle colored red which Elda identified to be the one she saw earlier parked by the detachment. Riding on the red motorcycle were two men, one of whom Elda identified as the assailant," the report added.

Suffering from four bullet wounds, the victim died in Balingasag Hospital in Balingasag town, Misamis Oriental.

Musni, in her report, said that it had been the usual practice of the victim and her family to go to their farm in Nabuolan on weekdays and later come down on weekends.

At the time of her death, the victim was sickly, according to Karapatan.

Gandinao was the primary witness in the killing of her 74-year-old father-in-law, the Misamis Oriental provincial chair of Bayan Muna, on Feb. 10.

Just like her father-in-law, Gandinao was actively involved in the campaign against the deployment of the military in the village.

The farmers' group Mofa has also been consistent in their calls for the pullout of military troopers in Salay because of alleged human rights abuses committed by soldiers against residents suspected of being members or supporters of the underground movement.

Gandinao was the third victim of political executions in Mindanao this year. She is also the 837th victim nationwide since 2001, the year when President Macapagal-Arroyo took over the presidency, according to Karapatan.

Renato Pacaide, Anakpawis regional coordinator in Davao del Sur, was killed in Digos City two weeks ago. *Jeffrey Tupas, Mindanao Bureau*

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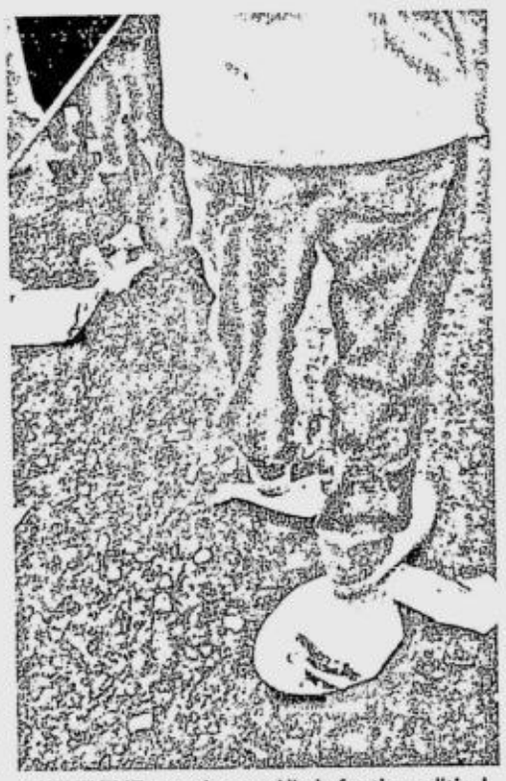
Pols most unpopular during Baguio flower fest

BAGUIO CITY—THE Team Unity senatorial ticket and Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. have been given assurance that they were well-received when they joined this year's Baguio Flower Festival floral float parade.

But an assessment of this year's festival indicated the candidates actually overstayed their welcome.

The Baguio Community of Volunteers Inc., the city tourism office and festival organizers indicated in their report to the city government that "negative feedback" generally greeted the candidates, the INQUIRER learned.

The report said a total of 200,000 tourists attended the festival's various activities, which lasted throughout February.



IN THE END people cared little for the political circus that joined the Sunday float parade of the Baguio Flower Festival. Many of their campaign materials were left strewn on the streets for street sweepers to clean up and tourists to step on. VINCENT CABREZA/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Benedicto Alhambra, city tourism officer, said the figure represented a 30-percent increase compared to the 2006 festival attendance, but the visitors gave the event a poor mark in spot surveys because they disapproved of the Team Unity's float when it motored through town alongside the festival's floral floats.

Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay was aboard a separate float. A blue helicopter bearing Pichay's campaign poster hovered as the floats paraded down Session Road.

Villar and Taguig-Pateros Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano of the Genuine Opposition ticket also attended the parades and greeted the crowd.

Lawyer Damaso Bangaoet Jr., the festival's founder, originally intended to ban the candidates from turning the parades into their campaign sortie, but he withdrew this policy later.

Bangaoet did not explain why, although among the members of the Baguio Flower Festival Foundation Inc. (BFFFI) are officials belonging to the administration Lakas-CMD party. BFFFI runs the festival.

Alhambra said many of the candidates broke festival rules, prompting volunteers to caution their supporters.

The candidates were barred from mingling with the audience and from distributing campaign materials, but Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson was observed throwing campaign shirts at the crowd.

Team Unity and GO supporters also put campaign banners and distributed their candidates' paraphernalia at the city market, Alhambra said.

"We stopped them. That was the reason why many of these candidates chose to leave the parade when the floats reached the city market area. They did not proceed to the Burnham Park [where the parade ended]," he said.

Some city officials acknowledged that they would not have been able to stop the candidates.

"This is an election year. We couldn't stop them anyway even if we had the clout," a councilor said.

The festival was also marred by reports of abusive crowd control personnel who reportedly harassed a television crew taping the parade.

Volunteers of the Kabataan News Network (KNN), a privately run program assisted by the Philippine Information Agency, complained to police that they were pushed away.

Organizers washed their hands off the issue, claiming that the volunteers had not been authorized to police the parade route.

Actress Melanie Marquez also contributed to the drama by refusing to ride on a float that was meant to promote a beauty product. She held a press conference to complain that she was duped into riding a different float.

"They never had a float. Marquez's representatives negotiated to have her [and the product she is marketing] to join a float advocating bio-fuels," Alhambra said.

Alhambra said the report wanted to focus on how it could tone down the festival's commercialism. He said the report had detailed how this year's festival was dominated by trade fairs and by politics. *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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PNP to dismantle private armies nationwide

CAMP DANGWA, LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Cagayan Valley and Abra account for 35 of 40 private armies in the country, according to a top police official.

Thus the Philippine National Police formed over the weekend a task force to conduct a "forceful, intensive and unrelenting campaign to dismantle and disband" private armed groups (PAGs), said Chief Supt. Eugene Martin, Cordillera police deputy chief for administration.

A PAG is defined as an organized armed group comprising three or more members.

The task force, which is supervised by Supt. Alan Purisima, PNP deputy chief for administration, reported that the ARMM has 14 PAGs; Cagayan Valley, 12; Cordillera, nine; Eastern Visayas, three; and Western and Central Visayas, one each.

"All of the PAGs in the Cordillera are in Abra," said Martin, who also heads Task Force Abra.

But he said the police expected the number of these groups to grow with the start of the campaign period for the May 14 elections.

Some reports listed 93 private armed groups, including 63 in Mindanao.

"The task force has no deadline (to dismantle the groups) but this would go on after the elections because these are not only political in nature," said Martin.

A task force report said: "These PAGs are being utilized not only by some politicians but also by unscrupulous individuals for criminal activities. If not immediately addressed, the illicit activities of these PAGs can bring tremendous problems to our country."

"Due to the sensitivity of the task at hand, the task force commander shall be given preference in choosing personnel to join the task force in coordination with the director of the respective national support units concerned," the report said.

The task force will come up with a comprehensive data bank, including the number of firearms held by the PAGs, as well as conduct surveillance and entrapment of PAG members.

Elections Commissioner Romeo Brawner earlier said the number of private armies increased this year.

Brawner, the commissioner-in-charge of Abra and the Cordillera Administrative Region, clarified that it was not yet known if these private armies were being maintained by politicians or candidates.

But he said private armies were the biggest problem in the province in the coming elections.

In a report, the Comelec Special Task Force headed by Brawner recommended the investigation of the alleged existence of private armed groups in Abra "and push for their disbandment."

Brawner, however, expressed confidence that the Comelec would be able to hold a "very peaceful election in Abra."

Brawner and his task force team went to Abra on March 2 for a dialogue with ranking police officials and Gov. Vicente Varela, Martin, Vice Gov. Jaime Lo, provincial board members, and 14 mayors of the province.

During the dialogue, Varela formally withdrew his appeal for the replacement of the PNP force in Abra.

The strict enforcement of the Comelec gun ban, "pending study for a probable enforcement of a total gun ban in the province of Abra" was among the recommendations drawn up following the dialogue. *Frank Cimatu, Inquirer Northern Luzon, with a report from Nikko Dizon in Manila*

A DAY'S WORK
A man navigates his fishing boat in the waters of Lutayan town in Sultan Kudarat province. The boat he's using is commonly used by Moro fishermen in remote villages of Mindanao as a means of transportation.
JEOFFREY MAITEM/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Higher revenue from coco products seen

By Ven Labro
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—EASTERN Visayas will experience an increase in export earnings from coconut-based products this year with the opening of more coconut processing plants in the region.

Benjamin Yu, production and regulation officer of the Philippine Coconut Authority regional office, said that for 2006, the export earnings of coconut products in the region amounted to about $50 million.

Yu said the export earnings last year came from Samar Coco Products Inc. based in Calbayog City and New Leyte Edible Oil in Tanauan, Leyte.

Samer Coco Products sold crude oil abroad worth over $15.3 million, while New Leyte Edible Oil in Tanauan, Leyte, sold crude coconut oil and other coconut-based products worth more than $34.8 million.

The region's top markets for coconut-based products, such as cochin oil, crude coconut oil and copra cake, include Japan, the United States, France, Malaysia, Indonesia, China, Singapore, Vietnam and Taiwan.

Yu said export earnings were expected to increase this year when a coconut oil mill and a coir processing plant would become operational in the capital town of Catarman in Northern Samar late this year.

Yu said the crude coconut oil mill was an expansion project of Samar Coco Products. The company has been operational since the late 1990s and has a capacity of 300 metric tons a day.

Operational

The Samar Coco Products mill being built in Catarman town has a projected daily output of 60 metric tons, Yu said. It will be operational in the third or last quarter.

Yu said a coir processing plant, with two decorticating machine, was also being set up in Catarman town by some Chinese investors.

Once operational, the coir plant will need about 100,000 husks per day for its two decorticating machines.

Yu disclosed that a similar coir plant project in Dagami town in Leyte, was now almost complete.

Investors coming from China own the coco coir plant project located in Barangay Kabuluran in Dagami. It has a capacity of 150,000 husks a day.

"The equipment is already there and they already started buying coconut shells and husks," Yu said. He added that the plant was expected to be operational in the next few months.

Late last year, Tacloban Oil in Tolosa town in Leyte and SC Global in Baybay town in Leyte have started operations.

Guinsaugon survivors slam power overprice

By Jani Arnaiz
Inquirer Visayas

MAASIN CITY—AN ELECTRIC COoperative supplying the power requirements of the New Guinsaugon, St. Bernard town, Southern Leyte, has started investigating the alleged overpricing of connection fees by one of its employees.

Southern Leyte Electric Cooperative (Soleco) I manager Roselo Gerong said the employee was now under investigation.

"We already formed a panel to look into the complaints," Gerong said.

The cooperative is also looking at the possibility of another person involved in the overpricing, he said.

"There is a report that a board member is reportedly involved but we could not yet identify him pending the outcome of our investigation," Gerong said.

The Soleco I started the investigation after several New Guinsaugon residents complained that one of its employee had collected fees ranging from P1,300 to P1,600 to speed up the installation of electric connections to their houses.

At least 10 residents, in a handwritten letter of complaint to Soleco I, asked for a refund of the money allegedly paid to the employee.

The residents said they learned that Soleco I charges only P100 for the installation.

The signatories of the letter included Alberto Bacala Jr., Erlinda Cabañas, Ramil Duhilig, Felisciano Obosa, Elsa Pagodon, Benedicta Siega, Rolando Terante, Joey Monghit, Rizaldy Socos and Marisa Libaton.

During the commemoration of the Guinsaugon tragedy, the residents of the New Guinsaugon relocation site complained that they did not have any electric connection yet. About 40 survivors from the tragedy live in the relocation site.

Gerong said that Gawad Kalinga, which is funding the installation, has yet to pay the balance of their services. "But the Gawad Kalinga head promised to settle their account. Anytime this month, the entire village would be lighted," he said.

MILF says bets welcome in camps without fees

SULTAN KUDARAT, SHARIFF Kabunsuan—The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) said politicians could campaign inside its areas without having to pay fees.

"We welcome them," Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said.

But Kabalu said candidates and their supporters would not be allowed to carry firearms or any deadly weapons inside the camp.

He said politicians should not worry about their safety while inside MILF territories because rebel fighters would provide them security.

The MILF has a heavy presence in some areas of this province, Maguindanao, the two Lanao provinces, the Zamboanga Peninsula, Central Mindanao and Southern Mindanao.

But while the MILF does not prevent politicians from campaigning inside its territory, Kabalu said the rebel group was not endorsing any candidate or political group.

As a matter of policy, the MILF does not participate in any elections, he said.

"We have been neutral in the past and will continue to be neutral this coming elections."

Asked if MILF members or supporters were barred from voting, Kabalu said the MILF had no policy on this.

He said their members or supporters could vote if they want to do so.

In Jolo, Sulu, about 1,000 members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) were among those who beat the December deadline for registration of voters, Vidzfar Julie, election director for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), said.

"It's a manifestation that the MNLF recognized the political exercise and it showed that the MNLF would like to participate in the forthcoming elections and they feel that they want to exercise their right to suffrage," Julie said.

Zain Jali, MNLF chair Nur Misuari's adviser, said the MNLF would actively participate in the elections by fielding candidates.

Among them is Misuari, who is being held in Santa Rosa City in Laguna.

"We will actively participate and we will protect the ballot boxes," Jali said. *Charlie Señase and Julie Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*

DAR says it's not installing farmers to prevent bloodshed

POLICEMEN sent to the controversial Hacienda Velez-Malaga appear ready for action, which didn't take place as agrarian reform officials stopped the planned installation of farmers. CARLA GOMEZ/INQUIRER VISAYAS

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—THE DEPARTment of Agrarian Reform is studying how it could install the farmer-beneficiaries at Hacienda Velez-Malaga in La Castellana town, Negros Occidental, without violence breaking out between the farmers and another group also claiming to be beneficiaries of land reform in the estate.

"We value land, but we value more the lives of the people," Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman said.

Pangandaman said his office was still assessing the situation at Hacienda Velez-Malaga in Barangay Robles, La Castellana to make sure that when it installs the farmer-beneficiaries, the different groups could live in peaceful coexistence.

He said that he was willing to step down as agrarian reform secretary if those calling for his resignation could install the beneficiaries on the farm without violence breaking out.

Pangandaman went to Negros Occidental last week to install the 122 Task Force Mapalad (TFM) farmer-beneficiaries on 144 hectares of the farm. The move did not take place, prompting the TFM to call for his resignation.

Pangandaman said the DAR wanted to ensure it had a comprehensive plan in place before installing the beneficiaries.

The secretary said he was studying the request of some of the farmers for a review of the Certificates of Land Ownership Awards (Cloas) that had been issued to the farmers.

He also noted that the continuing hunger strike at the DAR head office in Quezon City was meant to pressure him into taking action.

But he maintained that he had an obligation to ensure that, when the farmers are installed on the farm, there would be no violence.

At least 198 members of the Malaga Cuenca Multi-Purpose Cooperative and the Hacienda Malaga Independent Workers Union, who are also workers of Hacienda Velez-Malaga, are opposing the installation of the TFM members on what they claim is the prime area of the farm.

Pangandaman said he had tapped local leaders to help find a peaceful solution to the problem.

A rival farmers' group, which is closely identified with the owners of the estate, appealed to the TFM to find a peaceful solution to the claims, instead of asking for the head of Pangandaman.

Policemen were sent to the area during the aborted installation. A group of rival farmers blocked the TFM members from entering the estate.

TONEE DESPOJO/CDN

DISPLACED
Victims of the Mandaue City fire make their home at a classroom of the Mandaue Comprehensive High School, where an evacuation center for the fire victims has been set up.

Anglicans ask court to stay off dispute on land

BAGUIO CITY—ANGLICANS OF a Mt. Province town have asked a Court of Appeals justice to inhibit herself from a case involving a disputed church land because of her alleged bias for the government.

The CA 15th division nullified last month two local court decisions that acknowledged the Anglicans' right over a piece of property in Sabangan town that the government had expropriated to build a gymnasium.

In building the gymnasium, government contractors demolished in July last year a small Anglican church that stood on the property.

But the appellate court ruled that Judge James Kibiten, of the municipal trial court of Sabangan, and Judge Joseph Patnaan, of the regional trial court of Bontoc, erred in favoring the church because they failed to include the position of a Sabangan village that would benefit from the gymnasium.

Kibiten said in a May 2006 decision that the Anglicans had prior rights over the land. He was sustained by Patnaan in an October 2006 ruling.

Patnaan also barred the government from interfering with the Anglicans' "right to worship" whenever they hold Mass at the disputed site where the St. Peter's Mission church once stood.

Without Barangay Poblacion of Sabangan, which the appellate court considered "an indispensable third party" to the land dispute, the judges in effect violated due process, according to the CA ruling issued on Feb. 20.

The Episcopal Diocese of Northern Luzon had asked the CA on Monday to reconsider its "grossly unfair decision" because there was no evidence that the Sabangan barangay even staked a claim over the property.

The church wrote the CA to stress that the villagers had disowned reports that they had requested for a gymnasium, which was financed by the pork barrel of Mt. Province Rep. Victor Dominguez.

The church asked the CA that "the honorable member of this division assigned as ponente (writer of the decision)... be inhibited from further participating in this case."

Although the church did not name the justice in the petition, it was referring to Associate Justice Josefina Guevara Salonga, who also chairs the division. Associate Justices Mario Guariña and Ramon Garcia are the other members.

Floyd Lalwet, the church's counsel, claimed that the speed by which the court resolved the case was "suspicious," and taken together with three other instances, "strongly [distorted] an appearance of impartiality which is required in every tribunal."

The CA resolved the case in only two months. "While indeed this is... laudable..., it [may] be the fastest resolution of an appealed case...," Lalwet said.

"Such [an] extraordinarily speedy resolution gives rise to serious doubt as to the appearance of impartiality of the court." *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

MILF guerrillas disarm, seize soldiers on Lanao Sur patrol

PARANG, MAGUINDANAO—MORO rebels disarmed five Army soldiers and held them for nine hours in Lanao del Sur on Sunday night, police officials said.

The soldiers, led by a certain First Lieutenant Dacawi of the 51st Infantry Battalion, were released upon the intervention of local peace officials and a Malaysian-led international team monitoring the ceasefire between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, director of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao police, said the MILF captors were led by Commanders Mercury and Rasul.

Dacawi and his men were on their way to Barangay Taluan in Lumba-Bayabao, an interior town in Lanao del Sur, to investigate the burning by Mercury and Rasul of a house owned by a rival commander named Delta Force, Goltiao said.

Followers of Mercury and Rasul surrounded the soldiers and held them hostage, he added.

Dacawi's colleagues took custody of about 10 MILF fighters in a nearby village to force Mercury and Rasul to free the lieutenant and his men.

Goltiao said the rebels had reportedly arrived in the village on Sunday morning and, after failing to locate Delta Force, set his house on fire. According to the police, the groups of Mercury and Rasul have long been squabbling with Delta Force for control of certain Maranao communities and collection of "revolutionary taxes."

Lumba Bayabao Mayor Mindanao Dagalangit said the hostages were released past 8 p.m. through the efforts of the Municipal Peace and Order Council and the International Monitoring Team. The latter has been helping oversee the ceasefire in flashpoint areas in Central Mindanao since 2003.

"It's good that neither side fired a single shot. Otherwise, it could have been bloody," said Ghadzali Jaafar, MILF vice chair for political affairs.

The MILF and government are in negotiations for a peace agreement but the talks are stalled over issues of territory.

The MILF is demanding autonomous rule over at least 1,000 villages in Mindanao.

Clashes have been intermittent between Moro guerrillas and government soldiers, but the timely intervention of an international team that is monitoring a ceasefire agreement has prevented the encounters from completely derailing the peace talks.

In nearly all of the encounters, both sides have accused each other of firing the first shot.

Recently, a Marine general and other officials of the government have been prevented from leaving the camp of the Moro National Liberation Front over MNLF complaints on previous clashes that led to the deaths of some of its members.

The government refused to call it a hostage case. *Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao*

Probe sought of scam in Mt. Province college

BAGUIO CITY—SOME GOVERNMENT officials and teachers in Mt. Province have asked the Office of the Ombudsman to investigate the president of a local state college because of allegations of graft.

In another complaint, Juniper Dominguez, a resident of Sabangan town in Mt. Province, accused Nieves Dacyon, president of the Mt. Province State Polytechnic College (MPSPC), of condoning corruption by refusing to form the college's internal audit unit as required by Malacañang.

Dominguez is the brother of Sabangan Mayor Jupiter Dominguez.

The Ombudsman has asked Dacyon to answer the graft charges that arose from the delivery of school furniture and bee keeping equipment despite the fact that their purchase had not undergone mandatory bidding procedures.

MPSPC administrator Jocelyn Aguana, one of the complainants, had reported Dacyon to the local police in December 2006 for allegedly confiscating these supplies from her office, after Dacyon berated her for refusing to process the purchase payments.

Documents obtained by the INQUIRER suggested that Dacyon had been hounded by controversy since she assumed the college's presidency in 2005.

Ex-NPA

A pamphlet circulated recently by college staffers referred to Dacyon as "a former New People's Army member, still active with subversive organizations and who surprisingly became the college president... through the backing of [Mt. Province Rep.] Victor Dominguez and [former Rep.] Josephine Dominguez."

Open letters supposedly sent by parents of students also blamed Dacyon for the forcible retirement or resignation of several teachers.

Lawyer Randy Kinaud, Dacyon's legal consultant, said the pamphlet and the open letters proved that Dacyon was being harassed because of her politics and not due to school anomalies.

Kinaud said Dacyon had been active in cleaning up graft and corruption in the school. He said they have yet to receive a copy of the formal Ombudsman complaint. But he said Dacyon had denied charges that she had participated in illegal school purchases. *Vincent Cabreza and Desiree Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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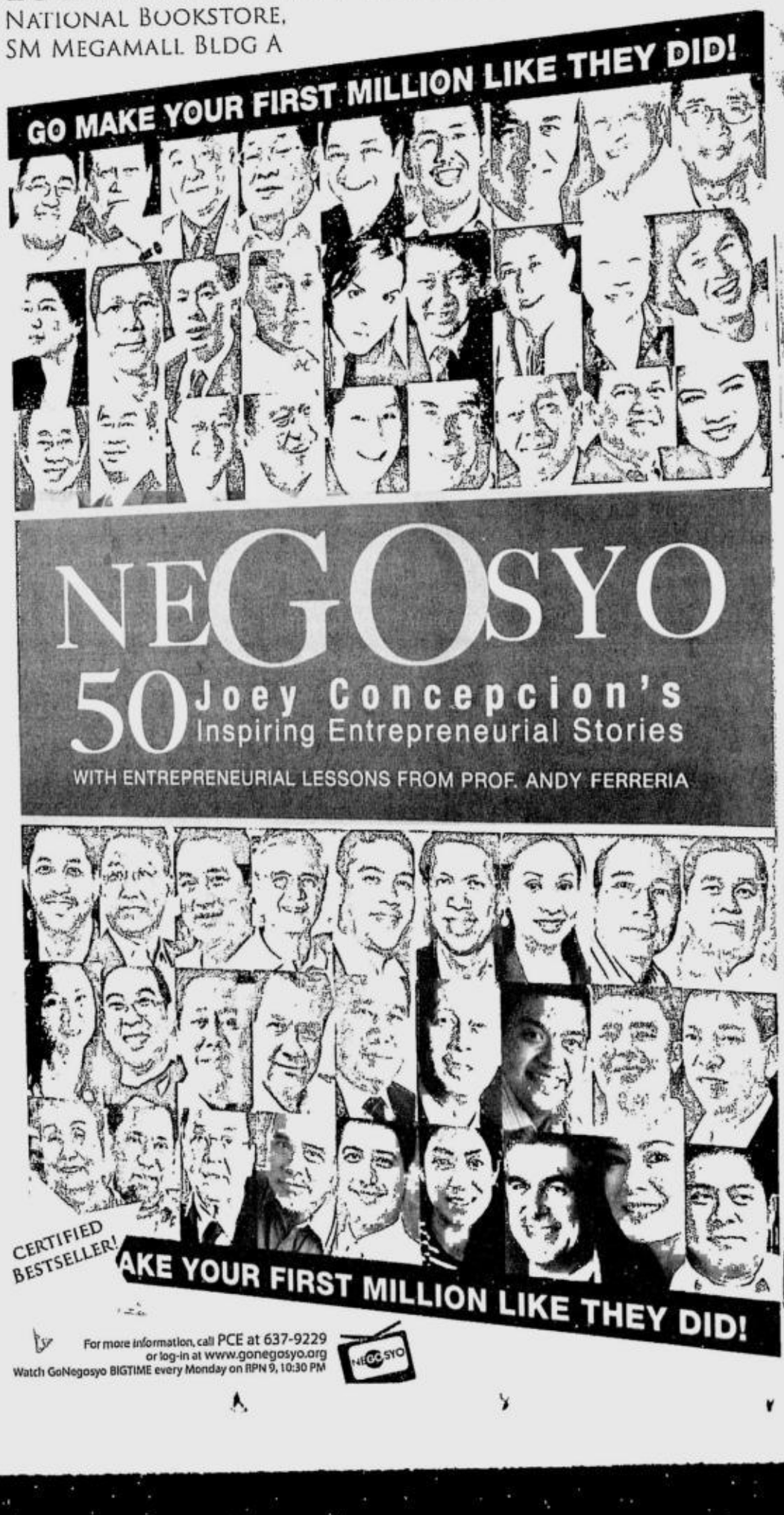

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Calls mount for agrarian reform chief to quit

By TJ Burgonio

CALLS FOR THE RESIGNATION OF AGRARIAN Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman are growing after he failed yet again last week to install 122 farmer-beneficiaries in their landholding in a sugar plantation in Negros Occidental.

Echoing the farmers' call, Jesuit priest Fr. Romeo Intengan, S.J. yesterday advised Pangandaman "to let go of his job if it is too agonizing for him to carry out."

Intengan said that while the former owner of the land in question was still resisting the farmers' installation, the matter could have been "adequately handled if the DAR secretary had the political will and the determination to implement what should have been done months ago."

"Pangandaman should not forget that his job is to see to it that agrarian reform beneficiaries end up actually possessing the land awarded them. He should side with the farmers declared as legal farm workers. He's supposed to champion land reform, not block its implementation," he said.

Intengan, founder of the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas (PDSP), also appealed to President Macapagal-Arroyo to direct Pangandaman to finally place the farmers in their 144-ha landholding in Hacienda Velez-Malaga in La Castellana town.

"It's time to put this problem to rest. All legal obstacles have been hurdled, the police and the military are ready to help to ensure a peaceful turnover and to keep the peace in the area through a community precinct that will be established therein," Intengan said.

Angered by the aborted installation, the farmer-beneficiaries who have been on a hunger strike outside the Department of Agrarian Reform office in Quezon City since Feb. 21 assailed Pangandaman last week and demanded his resignation.

Yesterday, Jose Rodito Angeles, president of Task Force Mapalad, the umbrella organization of the protesting farmers, reiterated their demand.

"As long as Pangandaman is DAR secretary, the farmer-beneficiaries of Hacienda Velez-Malaga will not be installed. That is why we are asking the President herself to order the installation and replace Pangandaman with somebody who can do the job," Angeles said.

Pangandaman called off the anticipated installation last Thursday because he feared a violent clash between the farmers and a rival group of tillers that had massed at the hacienda owned by Roberto Cuenca. He did not set a new date for the installation.

Yesterday, he shrugged off the calls for his resignation.

"We're doing our job. If I feel I'm not doing my job, I'll step down. Every time, we go down there, he (Intengan) should join us so that he'll know what's happening there," he said in an interview.

"We're trying to reach a peaceful solution here. I hope the farmers will understand this. I hope the other groups will not ride on the issue for their own agenda," he added. "There will be an installation, but we will not announce the date."

The hunger-striking beneficiaries, meanwhile, also scoffed at reports that Pangandaman had tapped some groups to dialogue with the stakeholders to ensure a violence-free installation.

"Pangandaman is again spinning a tale to save face after his failure last Thursday to install the farmer-beneficiaries... He is not capable of initiating or conducting talks. He has not even shown his shadow to the protesting farmers who are already on their 17th day of their hunger strike," Angeles said.

The farmers began pitching camp outside the DAR office on Feb. 20 and went on a hunger strike the next day to protest Pangandaman's failure to install them a number of times.

They broke their fast last Thursday, anticipating their installation, but resumed it the next day when it was clear the installation was not going to happen.

The DAR had placed the plantation under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program in 1996, and granted the farmers a collective certificate of land ownership award (CLOA) to the landholding in 2002. Cuenca questioned these actions before the local courts.

In 2004, the Supreme Court ruled that controversies involving land reform fell within the DAR's jurisdiction, paving the way for the farmers' installation.

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New sport river-trekking catches on in RP

DARAITAN – "THERE is no right or wrong way," the trailmaster told his nine fellow bushwalkers as they traced a little-known passage through the Philippines' Sierra Madre range. "But whining is not allowed."

The city slickers entered a different world in the sleepy village of Daraitan just 50 kilometers east of Manila. Here there are no roads, no bridges, no electricity, no telephones, and no 24-hour convenience stores. The locals speak a lilting, archaic form of Tagalog, on which the national language Filipino is based.

Tents, stoves, pots, clothing and three days' worth of food were carried in backpacks as the team walked across the country's longest mountain range.

Broadly tracking the now languid Daraitan River, the trail rises above the water in the dry season and loops through mountain valleys toward Luzon's east coast.

BUSHWALKERS from Manila scramble for footholds on the rocky bank of the Daraitan River during the course of a three-day trek across the Sierra Madre mountain range east of Manila, in the newest sport to grab the country. AFP PHOTO

River-trekking

River-trekking and its relative, canyoning, established sports in parts of the world as diverse as the United States, western Europe, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Hong Kong and Taiwan, are relatively new in the Philippines.

"You are the first people I've met who would walk into the water on purpose," farmer Freddie Cuerdo told the thirsty trekkers as he sold them coconut milk.

"It's exciting. It's a new thing and it's something different," said Jennifer Anarna, who climbs mountains outside her day job with a European consumer goods giant.

Spectacular cathedral-size marble formations, limestone caves, virgin tropical forests, hot springs and scattered settlements of Dumagat line the route.

Forest trails

Among the first known settlers of the Philippines, the seminomadic Dumagat spear river fish, trap birds and forest game, and weave baskets fashioned from tall rattan reeds when not burning the mountaintops to carve out farms.

"Usually, we do forest trails at rising elevations. Crossing rivers, especially with strong currents, is a different experience," said graphic designer Thaddeus Reantaso, like Anarna a member of the Manila-based AMCI Mountaineering Club Inc.

Interest in adventure tourism—mountain and rock climbing, spelunking (caving), scuba diving, off-road rallying and whitewater rafting are also gaining popularity—is fed by higher disposable incomes in the country.

"The climbing season started earlier. Usually the climbing starts next month," said the trailmaster who identified himself only as Oca. "Consumer confidence is much better than last year."

Adventure

Even as paychecks rise, more and more Filipinos are becoming "stressed out and they realize they need the weekend to recharge" through adventure or physical activity, Oca said.

"We came here to climb a nearby mountain in 1991 and somebody mentioned that this river went all the way to the Pacific Ocean. It perked up my interest because I had not seen the Pacific at the time," the trailmaster said.

An experienced mountaineer himself, Oca said climbing "no longer holds any fascination," and he began organizing annual river treks here in 2000.

Dry in 4 hours

This year's team, all AMCI members with several hundred mountain summits under their collective belt, kept their backpacking boots dry in the first four hours by scrambling along the rocky, at times brush-covered, riverbank.

It was slow going under the hot tropical sun and the day was broken up by regular rest breaks with freshly brewed coffee and food in the shade of trees or rock overhangs.

MEMBERS of the AMCI Mountaineering Club Inc. are forced to ford the Daraitan River after they run out of riverbank to trek on. AFP

At times, the only trail signs to go by were the red stains of betel nut spat out by the Dumagat, who chew the bitter mildly narcotic fruit to make their river commute more bearable.

The trailmaster told the team of twentysomethings and baby boomers that it was up to them to find the best route downstream.

"The river trail has a logic of its own," he said.

By noon the river had narrowed to a deep channel framed by two smooth vertical rock walls, forcing the team into the water where they rode their packs like improvised rafts.

Wild landscape

Despite using double bin liners sealed with rubber bands to waterproof their packs, half the team found their clothing and gear wet when they pitched camp on a sandbar in the late afternoon. A camera and a mobile phone were among the casualties.

They were forced to cook damp pasta for dinner. Aubergines and tomatoes bought from farmers along the way completed the menu.

Bird sounds

The next morning they awoke to a cacophony of bird sounds. Black crows, brown hawks and screeching blue kingfishers patrolled the deep canyon above the water.

A Dumagat family walked upstream on the far bank, and their dog dove into the water to scavenge among the tents.

A pair of huge hornbills, now rarely seen in depleted Philippine forests, emerged above the canopy, their red bills and long yellow tails standing out in the sun-drenched foliage that sagged under their weight.

Giant rotting logs littered the banks, a constant reminder that despite the breathtaking scenery, this is still a potentially dangerous sport.

Flash floods

The Sierra Madre's upper reaches unleashed unseasonal flash floods that killed more than 1,000 people along Daraitan and other areas downstream on Nov. 30, 2004.

The trail ended two days later in the hamlet of Pagsangahan, where Daraitan links up with another tributary to form the much bigger Agos River.

Weighed down by their heavy packs, the team had walked a total of 21 hours over three days. Locals say the trail is a mere 23 kilometers long and they normally cover it in a single day.

"I would definitely do this again," team member Reantaso said.

"Of course," Anarna agreed. *AFP*

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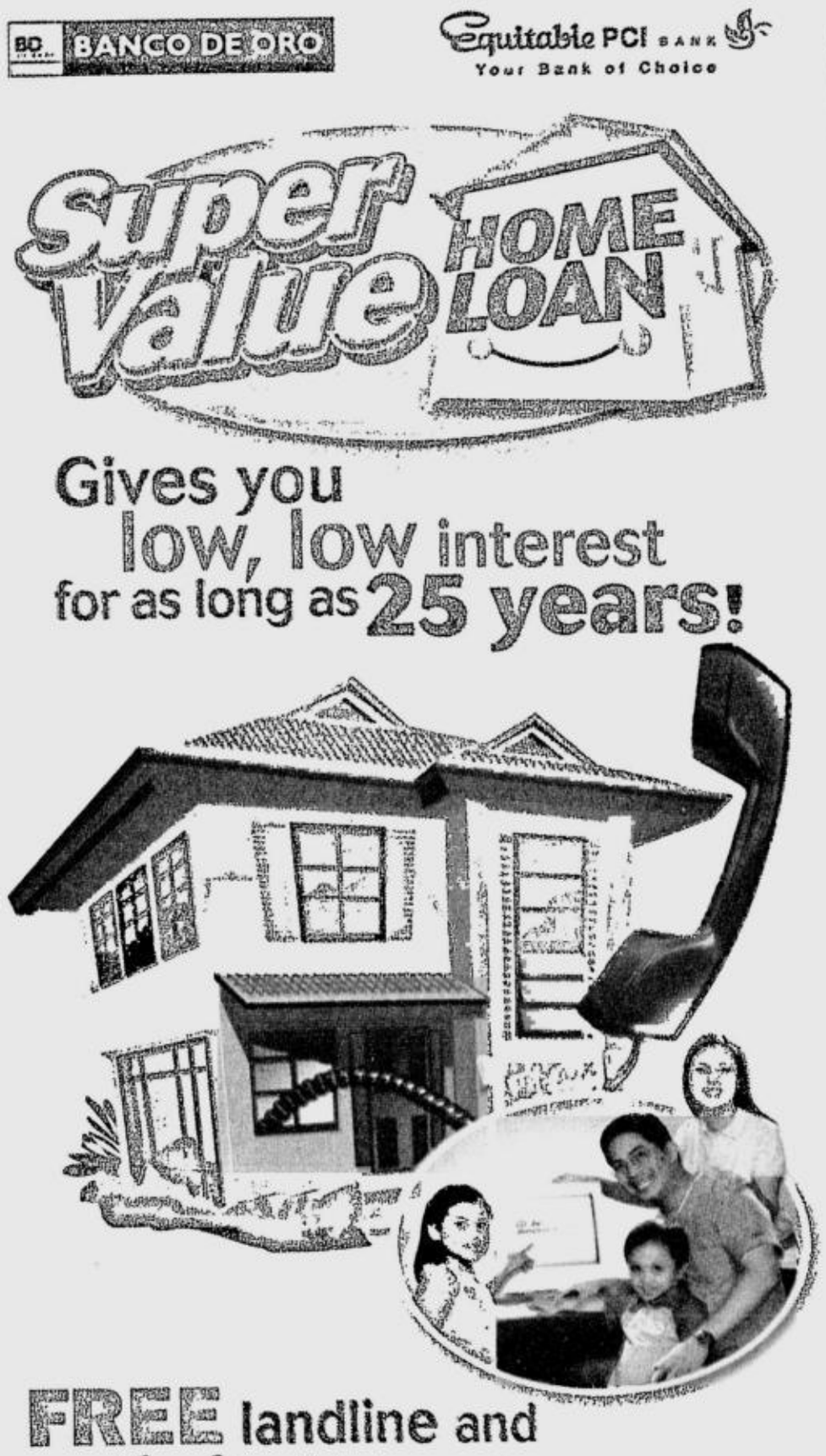

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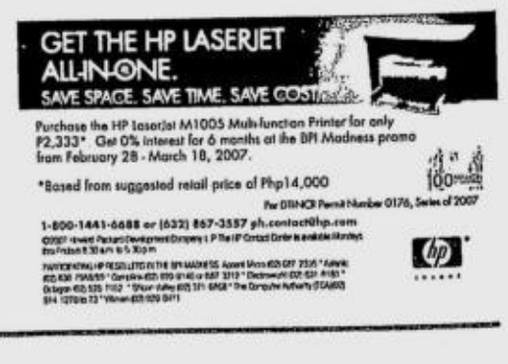


Tullahan bridge closed to traffic Friday

Success of alternative routes dry run factor in permanent closure

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

RESIDENTS IN VALENZUELA CITY SHOULD start thinking about alternate routes this early.

The Department of Public Works and Highways will push through with its plan to close Tullahan Bridge this Friday, but only temporarily. The 73-year-old bridge connects the cities of Valenzuela, Malabon and Manila to Bulacan province.

Ed Santos, DPWH project engineer, told the INQUIRER yesterday that after a dialogue with Valenzuela Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian, they decided not to implement their original plan—to shut down the bridge for months to pave the way for its total rehabilitation.

"Based on our dialogue with Mayor Gatchalian, we will have a dry run of the traffic rerouting scheme on Friday. If it is effective, he will agree to close it permanently for the construction of a new bridge," Santos said.

Last week, Tullahan Bridge was closed to traffic for a dry run of the traffic rerouting scheme that would be implemented once the bridge undergoes total rehabilitation.

After just a few hours, however, the structure was ordered reopened by Gatchalian after traffic in the area was completely snarled.

Before the dialogue with the mayor, Santos told the INQUIRER that the closure of the bridge would push through on Friday and that it would only be reopened to traffic upon the completion of its rehabilitation.

"We can no longer delay the implementation of the closure because it will prolong the construction period. The rainy season begins in the next two months," he said.

Construction of a temporary footbridge for pedestrians crossing the bridge has already started and is expected to be completed before Friday, Santos added.

The northbound lane of the bridge was set to be closed starting yesterday morning, but officials decided to postpone it to last night or early this morning amid traffic concerns, he said.

Lydia Chua, DPWH-National Capital Region Planning and Design Division chief, said the rehabilitation of Tullahan Bridge would take five months.

She pointed out that the project, which was planned seven years ago, should have started last month as the DPWH wanted it to be completed before the opening of classes in June.

Concerns about traffic and other issues forced the DPWH to delay the construction for a month. Santos warned that the bridge could collapse anytime. "If the construction is delayed and something happens, who will be responsible? The delay will not benefit anyone," he said.

Santos added that they expect the number of vehicles on the busy highway to shrink in the next few days following their information drive to make motorists aware of the rehabilitation project. An estimated 60,000 vehicles pass through the structure every day.

COOL IT!
Children take turns in taking improvised street showers from cold water in jugs to beat the summer heat on V. Luna Street in Quezon City yesterday. JOAN BONDOC

Makati intensifies anti-illegal drugs campaign

By DJ Yap

FORTY DRUG PUSHERS AND USERS WERE rounded up in operations conducted last month by the Makati Anti-Drug Abuse Council (Madac), city officials said yesterday.

Of those arrested, 10 were found to be on Madac's watch list of persons with a previous record of drug-related offenses, said Vice Mayor Ernesto Mercado who also chairs Madac.

Twenty-five others have since been sent to drug rehabilitation facilities for after-care and treatment, he said in a statement.

The antinarcotics operations which were conducted in 14 of the city's barangays yielded 64.75 grams of marijuana and 18.78 grams of shabu or methamphetamine hydrochloride worth almost P100,000, the official added.

The operations were conducted in Barangays San Lorenzo, Bangkal, San Antonio, Pio del Pilar, Palanan, Sta. Cruz, Tejeros, Olympia, Poblacion, Guadalupe Nuevo, Southside, Rizal, Cembo and West Rembo.

Mercado said drug abusers who want to reform may apply for assistance under the city's Handog Kalinga program.

Created in 2004, the program provides livelihood and skills training for reformed users and pushers. Some 300 drug dependents have benefited from the program as of last year, Mercado said.

"We aim to help those who sincerely want to change," he said. "Often times, they just need to be pointed in the right direction."

Early bird Bernabe vows continuity in programs

By Julie M. Aurelio

WILL THIS EARLY BIRD FROM Parañaque City get the worm?

Among the incumbent mayors in the southern part of Metro Manila, only Parañaque Mayor Florencio "Jun" Bernabe Jr. has so far filed his certificate of candidacy.

According to him, he will "do more of the same" should he be reelected in the May elections.

Bernabe filed his COC ahead of the pack on Feb. 26, which he described as an "auspicious day" based on feng shui practices.

From a dirty, traffic-congested city, the son of former Mayor Florencio Sr. managed to make it cleaner for both residents and motorists.

Trash

When Bernabe first assumed office in 2004, trash littered the city's streets while rains turned low-lying areas into swamps.

Known as the city of "broken windows," there were eyesores everywhere: Unkempt plants, unpaved roads, piles of garbage, abandoned cars and dim streets.

Few lampposts dotted Sucat Avenue, one of the city's main thoroughfares.

Several shabu laboratories were reported in Multinational Village and other exclusive subdivisions.

"But as you can see, Parañaque is much neater now. Garbage is regularly collected unlike before," Bernabe said.

Sucat Avenue, in particular, looks brighter because of the lampposts, flowers and hedges that adorn the center island.

Garbage trucks collect waste daily in the city while street sweepers keep the roads clean. The city also has a materials recovery facility located on Coastal Road, processing the segregation and recycling of trash.

Waterways

Bernabe said they are trying to clear the waterways, specifically Parañaque River, to avoid flooding and to make it more accessible to fishermen.

"We already borrowed equipment from the Philippine Navy to dredge certain portions of the river," he explained.

Bernabe plans to meet head on the challenges of serving the last remaining months of his term with a little help from a mascot.

Dressed in a red shirt and blue jeans, the mayor's usual attire—the mascot is Bernabe's look-alike.

He said he plans to use the mascot to stand in for him in campaign sorties he could not attend.

But while his mascot is out there entertaining crowds, Bernabe is sure to be somewhere else, fixing what remains of Parañaque City's "broken windows."

Manila eyes Harbour Center as site of new depot

By Allison W. Lopez

FROM PANDACAN TO THE MANILA HARbour Center in Tondo.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza yesterday said that the area off Manila Bay was the "most logical" place for oil firms at the Pandacan oil depot to move their operations.

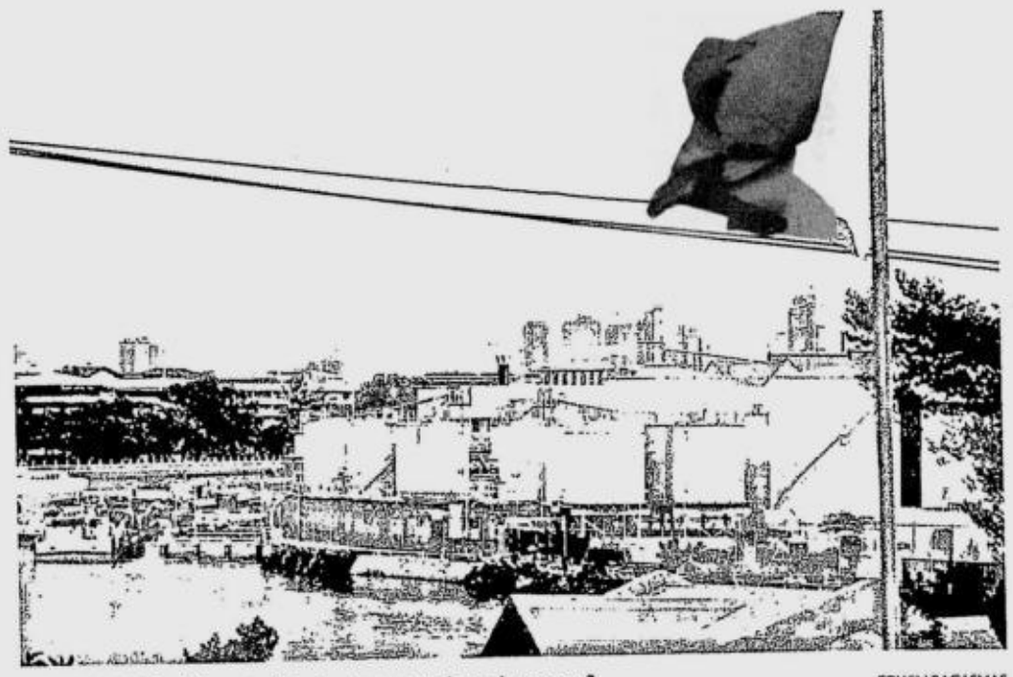
Atienza made the suggestion after the Supreme Court First Division last week ordered him to enforce a city ordinance reclassifying the Pandacan and Sta. Ana areas from "industrial" to "commercial."

With the reclassification, the depot which is being used by the Big Three oil companies—Petron, Shell and Chevron (formerly Caltex) would have to be shut down.

Atienza said Harbour Center, located at the northernmost part of Tondo, is an industrial zone. In addition, unlike the Pandacan oil depot which is surrounded by residential areas, Harbour Center is about one to two kilometers away from houses in the area.

"In fact, Total (another oil company) already relocated there after transferring their operations from Pandacan in early 2002," he added.

Atienza pointed out that since Tondo is not that far from Pandacan, the oil companies would not have to spend a lot of money in transferring their operations.



PANDACAN oil depot: Moving to a new location soon? EDWIN BACASMAS

Having a body of water close to the depot, he added, would also be a plus. He cited Hong Kong and Singapore as countries which have a similar setup. Petron spokesperson Virginia Ruivivar said it would also be easier for them to ship their products to the new depot from oil refineries in Bataan and Batangas.

DPWH resumes billboards crackdown

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

ATTENTION: OWNERS OF BILLBOARDS erected on Edsa. Make sure your free standing billboards are at least eight meters away from the main road.

Starting this week, the Department of Public Works and Highways will resume its crackdown on billboards which violate the circular it issued more than 15 days ago, Emmanuel Cuntapay, National Building Code Development Office director, said.

The circular provides setbacks for free standing billboards and those which are on rooftops.

Free standing billboards (or those supported by beams erected on the ground) should have a setback of at least eight meters—that is, the edge of the board should be eight meters away from the edge of the main road, he said.

This way, the billboard would not fall on the road or hit commuters during accidents, Cuntapay explained.

He told the INQUIRER that at least 80 billboards would be dismantled this week on the stretch of Edsa going to the North Luzon Expressway for violating the circular, which he said was based on the amended civil code.

According to the DPWH official, the crackdown was not only in anticipation of the coming rainy season, but also a proactive response to risks of disasters, especially since quakes have been reported recently in nearby countries.

Billboards on rooftops should also have enough clearance on both sides. The size of the billboard should not exceed one-third of the area of the supporting roof, to ensure that if the billboard collapses, it would not fall off the building but would stay within the roof area, Cuntapay added.

This is not only to ensure safety, but also to give motorists a clear and unobstructed view of the skyline, he said.

The circular, issued more than three weeks ago, gave violators at least 15 days to voluntarily dismantle their billboards.

Munti police chief removed from post

By Julie M. Aurelio

MUNTINLUPA CITY POLICE CHIEF SUPT. Jose Mario Espino was relieved yesterday of his post after speculations that he would be removed from office.

Southern Police District director Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales confirmed the news and told the INQUIRER that Espino was no longer the police chief, adding that the officer would be working with his staff for the meantime.

A copy of the memorandum issued by Rosales announcing Espino's relief said that Supt. Edgar Ferrater, Muntinlupa deputy police chief, would take over as officer in charge.

Espino, meanwhile, is expected to take over as Mandaluyong City police chief.

Philippine National Police chief Director General Oscar Calderon earlier ordered regional directors to reshuffle police chiefs who have been in their posts for over two years and who have relatives running in the May elections.

On Friday, Rosales said he received a clearance from the Commission on Elections allowing Espino's transfer.

Although Rosales stressed that Espino is not facing any administrative case or complaint, he refused to divulge the reason behind Espino's relief.

Espino, who took a leave of absence Friday in anticipation of his relief, claimed Muntinlupa Rep. Rozzano Rufino "Ruffy" Biazon had requested his relief before the May elections.

"I expected that I would be relieved last month. I had information that it was Biazon who wanted me out," the former police chief told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday.

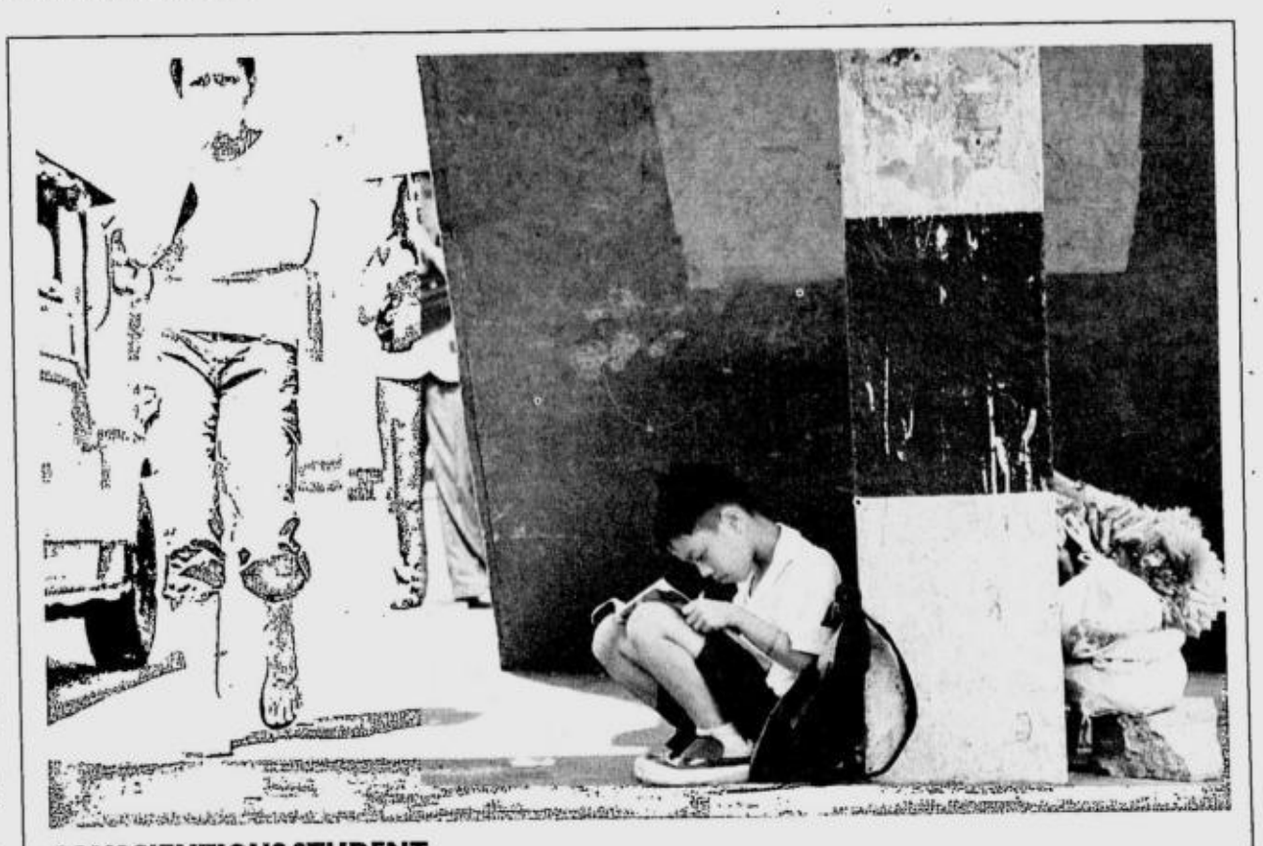
Espino said that Biazon, through certain channels, reportedly asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to replace Espino because the police chief allegedly favored TV host Ricardo "Dong" Puno who is running against the congressman in the May polls.

Biazon is running for his third and last term as congressman of Muntinlupa. Puno served as press secretary under deposed President Estrada. He also ran for a seat in the Senate in 2001, but lost.

"He (Biazon) thinks we are beholden to the administration. Feeling *niya* pro-Puno *kami*," the former police chief complained.

Espino added that he may have incurred Biazon's ire when he took away the congressman's two police bodyguards. The police official also had Biazon's name removed from the police mobile cars. Asked if he confronted the congressman over his allegations, Espino replied: "Of course. He denied it. But who else would it be?"

But some sources in the Muntinlupa City government expressed doubts about Espino's claims. "The chief has been identified with Biazon for sometime. Why would Biazon do that to Espino *kung bata niya yun*? The removal could not have come from Biazon," the source said, adding that Espino also reshuffled some of his key men when he learned he was about to be transferred to a new post.



CONSCIENTIOUS STUDENT
Dexter Columbres, a Grade 3 pupil at Commonwealth Elementary School in Quezon City, does his assignment underneath a pedestrian overpass near his school. RAFFY LERMA

Evidence mounts vs suspected robber

By Nancy C. Carvajal

POLICE FOUND MORE EVIDENCE against a suspected member of a notorious burglary gang who was arrested over the weekend in Caloocan City.

Chief Supt. Pedro Tango, Northern Police District director, said five cars were recovered near the syndicate's safehouse at 37-A Bisig ng Nayon, Barangay 4, Caloocan City.

Tango said that two more houses are now being watched by operatives "and more arrests are imminent."

Rafael Poblete, a suspected member of the "Gapos Gang" which operates in northern Luzon and Metro Manila was arrested on Saturday. Four other members escaped.

"One of the five recovered vehicles was verified to be stolen. We are still validating the ownership of the other vehicles," Tango said.

The recovered vehicles were a Toyota FX, Mitsubishi Adventure, a Honda City, a Nissan Sentra and a Ford Lynx.

"Two victims of the group also came forward and positively identified Poblete as a member of the big-time robbery syndicate," Tango added.

One of the witnesses was Chief Insp. Ferdinand Germino, a policeman from Pampanga. He said two of the firearms found in the suspects' vehicle were his. These were stolen when the gang members burglarized his house, he added.

Michael Cervera, a businessman from Marilao, Bulacan, also said that the suspects broke into his house and took P100,000 in cash and valuables.

Germino and Cervera, in separate statements given to the police, said the robbers tied them up and other members of their families before ransacking their houses.

Poblete, the gang's driver, was arrested after a barangay leader accosted him and his cohorts Saturday night for their suspicious actions.

The suspects were on board a Ford Lynx.

Recovered from the suspects' car were an Armalite, a Llama pistol, two .45 caliber pistols and a .38 caliber revolver.

Also found were several bonnets and two bolt cutters.

San Juan awaits cityhood plebiscite

By Santiago R. Alcantara

SAN JUAN MAYOR JV EJERCITO IS HOPEful his municipality will soon be Metro Manila's newest city within a month's time.

"Cityhood is a sign that San Juan has magnificent years ahead," he said.

According to Ejercito, since President Macapagal-Arroyo failed to sign into law the bill transforming San Juan into a city within the required period, its approval has become automatic.

"Even though she didn't sign it, it will not affect us," he said.

The bill was filed last year at the House of Representatives by San Juan Rep. Ronaldo Zamora.

Ejercito added that he was now waiting for the Commission on Elections to conduct a plebiscite allowing residents to vote for or against cityhood.

"I am hoping that the Comelec would do its job of guiding our people in San Juan to ratify the law," the mayor said.

According to records of the Commission on Audit, San Juan was the municipality with the highest gross income last year, with a total of P658.8 million.

With Navotas also gearing up for cityhood, only Pateros will be the remaining municipality in Metro Manila.

DID YOU KNOW

ALMOST 11 years ago, 160 persons were killed and 95 others were injured in a fire that hit the Ozone disco on Timog Avenue, Quezon City. The fire on March 18, 1996 was the worst to hit the country in recent memory, in terms of fatalities. It was caused by electrical overloading. Two owners of the disco were found guilty of reckless imprudence in 2001. They were sentenced to four years in jail and, along with four other board members, were ordered to pay the victims and their families over P20 million.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SUGAR REGULATORY ADMINISTRATION
North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
P.O. Box 70, U.P. Diliman, Quezon City
TIN 000-784-336-000

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) through its Bidding and Awards Committee (BAC) invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of the following:

Schedule Bidding Activities	CONTRACT FOR JANITORIAL SERVICES C.Y. 2007 – 2008	CONTRACT FOR SECURITY SERVICES C.Y. 2007 – 2008
Issuance of Eligibility & Bidding Documents	March 13 – April 4, 2007 7:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M. SRA Bidding Secretariat 3rd Floor SRA Annex Building Sugar Regulatory Administration North Avenue, Diliman, Q.C. For a non-refundable amount of Php 2,000.00	March 13, 2007 – April 13, 2007 7:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M. SRA Bidding Secretariat 3rd Floor SRA Annex Building Sugar Regulatory Administration North Avenue, Diliman, Q.C. For a non-refundable amount of Php 2,500.00
Pre-bid Conference	March 26, 2007 9:00 A.M. SRA Training Room North Avenue, Diliman Quezon City	March 26, 2007 2:00 P.M. SRA Training Room North Avenue, Diliman Quezon City
Submission & Opening of Eligibility & Bid Envelopes	April 10, 2007 9:00 A.M. SRA Training Room North Avenue, Diliman Quezon City	April 16, 2007 9:00 A.M. SRA Training Room North Avenue, Diliman Quezon City
APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT	Php 2,200,000.00	Php 4,850,000.00

For particulars, please contact:
The Bidding Secretariat – Telephone No. 929-68-37

All particulars relative to the Eligibility, Bid bond, Pre-bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contracts shall be governed by the provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations and other applicable government rules and regulations.

The SRA assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense incurred in the preparation of the bids.

The SRA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or informality therein or accept any bid(s) or offer(s) which it may consider to be advantageous and beneficial to the government.

(Sgd.) JAMES C. LEDESMA
Administrator

(PDI – March 13, 2007)

Court of Appeals Justice probed for graft

MY RELENTLESS CAMPAIGN AGAINST SOcalled hoodlums in robes is paying off.

The Supreme Court is speeding up the investigation of Court of Appeals Justice Elvi John Asuncion, chair of the 12th division, for allegedly delaying the resolution of cases unless he was bribed, according to my mole in the high tribunal.

In a full-court resolution, the high tribunal has ordered a "judicial audit" on Justice Asuncion relative to charges of his alleged corrupt activities.

A complainant earlier filed a case against Asuncion in the Supreme Court for his "unreasonable delay in the disposition of motions for reconsiderations which have been pending for six months to more than a year unless the parties would come across."

Retired Supreme Court Justice Bernardo Pardo has been asked to investigate the complaint and make a recommendation in 90 days.

This is not the first time Asuncion has been the subject of an investigation for alleged graft. In 2001, Asuncion was investigated for allegedly receiving money placed in two gym bags that were brought by two men to his office.

But the appellate court justice was cleared of the charge because there was "no legitimate complainant."

If the latest complaint against Asuncion is true, let's hope he is given his walking papers.

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

He would probably be the first justice in the higher courts to be dismissed for graft. His dismissal would be a clear message to corrupt magistrates to mend their ways.

***

Chief Justice Reynato Puno's praiseworthy campaign to rid the judiciary of bad eggs should not only extend to corrupt magistrates, but to incompetent justices and judges as well.

One of the most incompetent judges in my book is Bulacan Regional Trial Court Judge Andres Soriano who condemned a quadriplegic, Ronaldo "Jeff" Quesada, to a life in prison for rape.

A quadriplegic is a person who is paralyzed in both arms and both legs. Jeff has been a paralytic at the age of 2 after he was stricken with polio. We are probably the only country in the world where a complete paralytic is in prison for rape.

Judge Soriano's verdict defies description. Jeff can't even go to the toilet without being bodily carried by two well-built men, so, how could he have committed rape?

***

The Commission on Elections should let pass for now the electioneering charge against administration senatorial candidate Luis "Chavit" Singson. The guy didn't know any better when he handed money to people who asked him for donations .

I was with him in Taiwan last December during a business trip where I was able to observe him up close and personal.

Singson was approached by Pinoy factory workers who were having a Christmas party in a compound where they were working.

Asked for a donation for their door prizes, Chavit reached into his pocket and handed $1,000. Just like that.

Another administration senatorial bet who's easily approachable is Prospero "Butch" Pichay. You can call Pichay names, but like Singson, he helps complete strangers.

I was having dinner with him at a Quezon City restaurant once when a stranger approached our table to ask for his help.

Instead of showing annoyance, Rep. Pichay called a member of his staff even at that late hour.

He then told the stranger to see the staff member at his office at the Batasan where he could attend to his request.

Shabu mart witness' credibility questioned

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
Caraga Administrative Region
Division of Surigao del Sur
Tandag
(086) 211-4375 – Telefax

DepED

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Dep-Ed, Division of Surigao del Sur, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project.

Supply and Delivery of School Furniture

Package No.	Particulars	Quantity (All Wood) Tables	Chairs	Armchairs	Location	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Contract Duration
Package A	Elementary Table & Chairs and Elem. Armchairs	566	1138	1,800	Surigao del Sur	2,258,800.00	120 CD
Package B	Secondary Armchairs			3,022	Surigao del Sur	2,266,500.00	120 CD

Prospective Bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activites is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1 Issuance of Bid Documents	March 14-20, 2007
2 Pre-bid Conference	March 21, 2007
3 Submission and Opening of Bids	April 2, 2007 @ 10.00 am
4 Bid Evaluation	April 3, 2007
5 Post-qualification Evaluation	April 4, 2007
6 Preparation of Resolution to Award	April 9-10, 2007
7 Issuance of Notice of Award	April 11-12, 2007
8 Contracting	April 13-16, 2007
9 Issuance of Notice to Proceed	April 17, 2007

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P2,500.00 to the Dep-Ed, Division Office Cashier.

(Sgd.) TEOFILA G. CABATUAN
BAC Chairman

(PDI–March 7 & 13, 2007)

By Allison W. Lopez

LAWYER RAYMOND FORTUN SAID yesterday the police had no solid case against his client Amin Imam Boratong with an accused murderer as their witness.

He said they would file a counter-affidavit to discredit the main witness Samer Palao, who had pending cases of kidnapping with murder, frustrated murder and light threats. Palao also got a conviction for a drug possession case in 2000, the lawyer added.

"Palao is testifying to get away from these charges," Fortun said. "It's so easy to say this and that, but where is the evidence?"

Palao had pointed to Boratong as the operator of a 2,000 sq m shabu market raided last February in Pasig City. Boratong denied the allegation and claimed Palao—whom he described as his biological brother—as the real operator of the shabu mart.

Fortun said the Department of Justice already summoned Boratong's first wife Memie, who Palao said was the one who "counted the money."

"I would not be surprised if he would be willing to withdraw the charge against Memie, if Memie will do the same," said Fortun.

Boratong's first wife had accused Palao of murdering and kidnapping a relative.

Fortun said it was a basic tenet in law that for evidence to be credible, it should also come from a credible source.

"It's very frustrating why the Department of Justice (DOJ) would entertain such a ridiculous complaint from Palao," he said, adding that the police have no other evidence apart from Palao's statement.

"His statements are unsubstantiated," Fortun said.

The lawyer said they would ask for more time from the DOJ so they could file the counter-affidavit.

METROBRIEFS

Woman found dead

A YOUNG woman believed to be the victim of rape was found dead on a pavement early yesterday morning in Makati City. Police said the victim, in her 20s, was discovered lying face-down on the sidewalk in front of RIMA building at 2270 Chino Roces Avenue, Barangay Magallanes. At 5:50 a.m., security guards Ramil Capispisan and Rodelito Cabug-os saw the victim's body, case investigator SPO1 Lewelie Cristobal said. She had wounds in her head, believed to have been caused by blows from a 21-inch iron bar recovered at the scene. The victim was partly undressed from the waist down, prompting investigators to speculate that she was raped before she was beaten to death. Police also recovered a pair of eyeglasses and a ballpoint pen, but her other possessions, including identification cards, were missing.

DJ Yap

Hunt for killer asteroids runs short of money

WASHINGTON—NASA CAN FIND AND track most of the nearby asteroids that could hit and damage the Earth, but there is not enough money in its budget to finish the project within a 15-year deadline mandated by Congress, according to an agency report released on Friday.

The report said there were about 20,000 asteroids and comets orbiting relatively close to our planet that could deliver blows ranging from destroying cities to ending all life.

These objects, ranging from 150 yards to more than a mile in diameter, represent about 20 percent of the asteroids and comets whose paths routinely pass between the sun and the Earth's orbit, it said. Rather than trying to detect, track, catalog, and characterize all of the more than 100,000 "near Earth objects," as Congress asked in a 2005 Nasa authorization bill, the study said it would be more realistic to focus on those representing a real potential hazard.

However, accomplishing this by 2020 would require using ground-based telescopes sponsored by other agencies for other purposes, possibly building a dedicated observatory for finding and tracking hazardous bodies, and launching a spacecraft to observe the space around Earth from Venus. Such an undertaking, the report said, would cost more than $1 billion that the agency does not have.

Nasa currently runs a program called the Spaceguard Survey to track the largest potentially hazardous objects, those greater than 3,300 feet in diameter that could devastate most life if they hit Earth. That is what scientists believe happened to the dinosaurs some 65 million years ago. This program, using ground-based observatories, is budgeted at $4.1 million a year through 2012.

Donald K. Yeomans, director of the Spaceguard program, said that there were believed to be 1,100 of these larger objects and that the survey had cataloged about 73 percent of them. The initial goal of tracking 90 percent of them should be reached by 2010, more than a year later than originally planned, he said.

Yeomans, attending a planetary defense conference here last week at George Washington University, said that the goal of surveying 90 percent of potentially hazardous objects could be reached more cheaply than in the Nasa study by using only ground-based observatories. But Congress would have to change its goal from 2020 to 2026, he said.

Building, launching, and operating a deep-space orbiting infrared observatory to complete the task more quickly could cost another $700 million, he said. *NYT*

Land mines hinder Cambodia growth –PM

PHNOM PENH—LAND MINES REMAIN one of the biggest obstacles to Cambodia's development, Prime Minister Hun Sen said Monday at the start of a conference marking the 10th anniversary of the international mine ban treaty.

Hundreds continue to be killed or maimed each year in Cambodia, where millions of mines or pieces of unexploded ordnance remain scattered across former battlefields.

"Land mines are still one of the biggest issues for us and they are threatening Cambodian security and development," Hun Sen said, adding the government would continue to destroy its stocks of mines.

Land mines were a key weapon in Cambodia's decades-long civil war which ended in 1998, and were often laid indiscriminately in large swathes of forest or field.

"We don't need any more weaponry. We need to clear these from our country," the premier said.

Delegates from Southeast Asia, Europe and the Middle East are also attending the three-day Ottawa Treaty conference, which will focus on how land mines affect development.

"Land mines are a development issue, and cultivating partnerships in mine action is vital in order to overcome the challenges mine-affected countries face," said Canada's ambassador to Cambodia Donica Pottie.

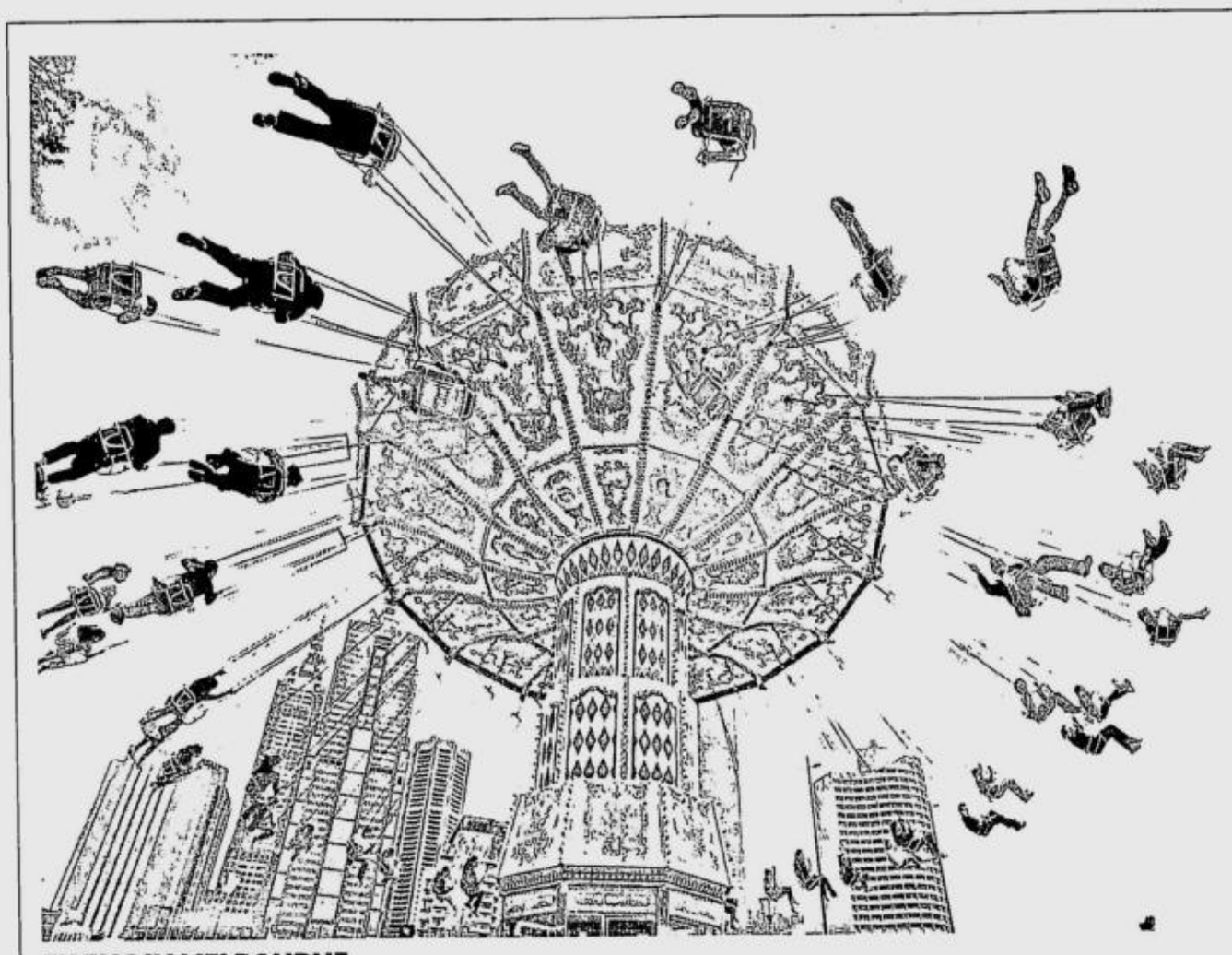
Several foreign demining groups have worked with the government's own ordnance agency since 1992 to clear Cambodia's minefields.

But the work is extremely slow, and roughly 2,900 sq km of mine-infested land remains.

Cambodian demining officials say they hope to have Cambodia largely cleared of mines by 2020, but add donor disinterest is threatening their efforts.

Last year, the government's Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) lost a fifth of its foreign funding, which has been decreasing steadily since 2004, CMAC director general Khem Sophoan told AFP earlier.

Six of the Association of South East Asian Nation's (Asean's) 10 members, including Cambodia, are among the 153 countries worldwide to have signed the Ottawa treaty. *AFP*



FLYING IN MELBOURNE
With the city skyline in the background, patrons fly around on an amusement ride as part of the Moomba Festival in Melbourne, March 12. Hundreds of thousands of people flock to the city to watch parades and other activities on the city's Yarra River which celebrates local community and cultural groups and the diversity of the city. AFP

Kremlin in control after polls

MOSCOW—THE PRO-KREMLIN UNITED Russia party looked firmly in control as results came in Monday from regional elections that were marked by violent incidents and the absence of a serious opposition challenge.

United Russia had secured commanding leads in 13 out of 14 races, the Itar-Tass news agency reported, citing provisional results from regional election officials.

The polls in which 31 million people, or about a third of the electorate, were eligible to vote, were seen as setting the stage for nationwide legislative elections to the Duma lower house of parliament in December.

The December polls will in turn form the backdrop to a presidential vote to confirm a successor to President Vladimir Putin next March.

"The main result" of Sunday's vote "is that United Russia has remained the leading party.... It had no rivals in the majority of regions," the general director of polling agency VTsIOM, Valery Fyodorov, told the Interfax news agency.

The recently created pro-Kremlin party A Just Russia, headed by the speaker of the upper house of parliament, Sergei Mironov, was expected to win the remaining region, Stavropol, in southern Russia, according to provisional results. AFP

Dozens of pilgrims slaughtered after Iraq peace talks

BAGHDAD—INSURGENT ATTACKS claimed another 58 Iraqi lives on Sunday, including 31 Shiite pilgrims slaughtered in a car bomb attack on a convoy returning from a religious festival.

The latest deadly blasts came a day after Iraq urged its neighbours to stop supplying weapons and cash to extremist militants, at Baghdad peace talks which saw a rare face-to-face clash between the United States and Iran.

US forces rounded up 15 "suspected terrorists" in various raids, but still the carnage continued, with insurgents targeting Shiite pilgrims, labourers and the offices of a mainstream Sunni political party.

A car bomb attack in Baghdad's downtown Karrada district killed 31 Shiite devotees and wounded 25 more as their convoy returned from Karbala, which on Saturday hosted millions of pilgrims for the festival of Arbaeen.

Of the wounded, five were in critical condition, according to a medic at Baghdad's Ibn Nafis hospital.

Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims were on the road, making their homeward journey on foot or in cars and buses. Last week almost 200 were killed in sectarian attacks by Sunni insurgents.

Ten commuters were killed and eight wounded when a suicide bomber detonated explosives strapped to his body on board a minibus as it passed near Baghdad's Mustansiriyah University, a frequent target of extremists.

In another attack, five construction workers were killed and 10 wounded when their bus hit a roadside bomb near Baladruz, 100 kilometres (60 miles) northeast of Baghdad, in the violent province of Diyala, police said.

Further north in Mosul, a bomb ripped through the office of the Islamic Party, killing four people, said police Brigadier General Mohammed al-Wagga.

Party official Mohammed Shakir al-Ghanam said three of the victims were guards and the fourth was a suicide bomber. Police could not confirm this. AFP

WOMEN grieve during a funeral for some of the pilgrims killed in Sunday's car bomb attack in Baghdad March 12. A car bomb targeting a truck carrying Shiite pilgrims killed 31 people and wounded 20 in Baghdad's central Karrada district. REUTERS

Israel cracking down on illegals to give Jews jobs

TEL AVIV—HOLDING UP A BIBLE IN A makeshift church in Tel Aviv, an African pastor asks God to shield his flock of migrant workers from Israeli arrest.

"We will go out under your protection, Lord, and come home safe," Solomon Tetteh shouts. Worshippers respond with "Amen." Where Israel previously welcomed many Christian migrant laborers from Africa and Asia—to replace Palestinians who used to do the work—it now aims to reduce their number, to cut unemployment among Jews.

It has launched repeated crackdowns on an estimated 80,000 or more foreign workers who lack work permits or whose papers have expired or been revoked. Another 85,000 migrants are working legally in the Jewish state.

After a Palestinian uprising began in 2000 in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, Israel brought in more foreign workers to replace Palestinians who worked on farms and building sites.

Israel viewed Palestinians as a security risk, though human rights groups said taking away their jobs amounted to collective punishment.

Many of the illegal workers seek support and spiritual solace in a cluster of makeshift churches that have opened in apartment blocks in the coastal city of Tel Aviv.

Sometimes equipped with musical instruments and plastic chairs—but with no pictures of Jesus on display—the churches are concentrated in a run-down area around the central bus station and serve mainly Africans who entered Israel on tourist visas and could not obtain work permits.

Reverend George Gyasi-Baaye, from Ghana, said there had been nearly 40 churches active in the area in previous years, but some have closed down, partly because deportations had shrunk their congregations. *Reuters*

Swiss faces jail for insult to Thai king

CHIANG MAI—A SWISS MAN FACES up to 75 years in prison after pleading guilty Monday to charges of insulting Thailand's king, a serious offence in a nation where the monarch is revered.

Oliver Jufer, 57, was arrested on Dec. 5 for defacing several of the king's ubiquitous portraits with spray paint during a drunken spree through the northern city of Chiang Mai, 700 km north of Bangkok.

He was charged with five counts of lese majeste—the crime of offending the dignity of a sovereign—as well as lesser charges of destruction of public property.

If convicted he faces up to 75 years in prison, according to police, 15 for each of the counts of lese majeste.

"He pleaded guilty, and the court set a date for the verdict on March 29," one court official said.

Court officials and police provided few details of the three-hour hearing held behind closed doors, citing sensitivities surrounding the monarchy.

Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej is the world's longest-reigning monarch, and one of the few who is still protected by tough lese majeste charges that prohibit any insult to the royal family.

Thai law allows anyone to file a lese majeste complaint with the police, which makes people reluctant to engage in any sort of public conversation about the king or his family. *AFP*

TOP DOG
Willy, a Tibetan Terrier, pictured with the trophy, is named Best in Show at Crufts 2007, at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham, England, March 11. Crufts was founded in 1891 and this year sees 24,964 entries from 22,320 individual dogs, spanning 182 breeds. AP

Oil that fries your burger can run your automobile

PHILADELPHIA—AFTER A GOOD meal, how about asking the head waiter if you can take the waste grease from the kitchen to fuel your car?

In the search for sustainable and nonpolluting alternatives to fossil fuels, a small band of ecologically minded people are turning to vegetable oil and recycled restaurant grease to run their cars, trucks and even home-heating systems.

Entrepreneurs, some backed by public funds, are proving cars can be run on low-cost materials that are a readily available alternative to environmentally damaging fossil fuels.

One driver, Scotsman Antony Berretti, is so keen on the technology that according to his website he spent three months driving his home-converted Fiat van all the way around Europe powered by waste vegetable oil scrounged from restaurants.

"Fancy driving across Europe for free? Fuel cost zero?" is the intriguing proposition at http://www.macharsoft.co.uk/rmp/free-fuel.html.

In Easthampton, Massachusetts, Greasecar Vegetable Fuel Systems makes conversion kits for cars to run on vegetable oil.

The company has sold about 3,500 kits during its nine years in business, and says sales have been doubling annually in the last few years.

The kits are priced between $800 and $2,000 and users typically get used vegetable oil from local restaurants that are happy to give it away because they usually have to pay for disposal.

With the increasing popularity of vegetable oil as a motor fuel, a small industry of conversion kit installers has grown, and some also supply the oil for their customers. *Reuters*

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Chirac bows out, calls on France to shun extremism

PARIS—PRESIDENT JACQUES Chirac announced on Sunday he would not seek reelection next month after 45 years in frontline politics and made a final appeal to French voters to shun extremism.

Chirac, 74, has served as head of state since 1995 and leaves behind a chequered record that consists as much of symbolic gestures as concrete policies.

In a televised address, Chirac, who was a scourge of US policy in Iraq, said he was proud of what he had achieved but would have liked to have modernized France more rapidly.

"At the end of my mandate, the moment will have come for me to serve you otherwise. I will not seek your backing for a new mandate," he said in a somber, 10-minute speech where he laid out some of the major issues facing France.

"Not for one minute have I ceased to serve this magnificent France. This France which I love as much as I love you," said the final survivor of a political generation that started out in the postwar governments of General Charles de Gaulle.

His decision to stand aside was expected and clears the way for a new generation of leaders born after World War Two.

All the three main contenders to succeed Chirac—Nicolas Sarkozy of the ruling UMP party, Socialist Segolene Royal and centrist Francois Bayrou—are in their 50s and all have pledged to break with the politics of the past 25 years.

Chirac, a conservative like Sarkozy, said Sunday was not the moment to endorse any of the contenders, but he made clear that he hoped voters would reject far-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, who finished second in the 2002 presidential election.

"Never compromise with extremism, racism, anti-Semitism or the rejection of others. In our history, extremism has already nearly ruined us," he said.

Le Pen said Chirac would go down as the worst president in the history of France. "It's a great joy...I am losing my worst enemy," he told TF1 television after Chirac's address.

Chirac will be remembered for abolishing compulsory military service, playing an important role in ending the Yugoslav civil war in the 1990s and being the first president to acknowledge that French officials assisted in the World War II Holocaust.

But he will perhaps be best remembered outside France for his fierce opposition to the 2003 US invasion of Iraq and embodied the forces scornfully dismissed by former US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld as "Old Europe."

"President Bush wishes President Chirac all the best as he enters life after politics. The United States and France have been and will remain steadfast partners and allies," said Gordon Johndroe, spokesperson for the White House National Security Council.

Chirac leaves behind a difficult legacy for his successor, with the French economy underachieving, the state heavily indebted, unemployment stubbornly high and social tensions still simmering following rioting in deprived suburbs in 2005.

FRENCH President Jacques Chirac poses after giving an evening message to the nation, broadcast on radio and television, March 11, from the Elysee palace. The 74-year-old leader has been in office since 1995, after more than 40 years in politics. AFP

In that year he suffered a big defeat when French voters rejected the planned European constitution, pushing the European Union into a crisis that the next president will have to defuse.

He referred to the setback on Sunday and said France must continue working for a united Europe.

"We cannot face up to the economic upheavals of the world alone. France must demand for a powerful Europe, a political Europe," he said, taking aim at "unbridled liberalism."

But the former Paris mayor, who has long been dogged by accusations of corruption that he has always denied, said France had nothing to fear from globalization and should continue to play a major role on the world stage.

"France must defend tolerance, dialogue and respect between men and its cultures. What is at stake is peace and security in the world," he said. *Reuters*

Visitors to US falling due to security scares

By Tim Gaynor

GRAND CANYON, ARIzona—Maryellen Fleming-Hoffman manages a gift store on the plunging rim of the Grand Canyon, where visitors come to marvel at one of the world's greatest attractions.

Business is good, local travel is buoyant, although one thing is different: Foreign visitors to the canyon, like other US tourist attractions, are no longer coming in the numbers they once did, she says.

"Overall, the number of foreign visitors are down and we'd like to see more of them," Fleming-Hoffman said in the Hopi House store, which sells a selection of American Indian jewelry and other handicrafts.

The store is among travel-related businesses across the United States feeling a decline in the number of overseas visitors, which have yet to recover to levels before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

According to figures from the Travel Industry Association of America, the number of travelers to the United States—not including Canadians and Mexicans—has dropped by 17 percent since 2001.

Despite a record year for world tourism last year and a weak dollar against both the British pound and the euro, the number of visitors from Western Europe dipped by nearly three percent over the previous year.

The pinch has been felt by businesses from California to the sunshine state of Florida, which draws tourists with its theme parks and beaches.

According to industry lobbyists and analysts, the chief reason behind the decline is a convoluted visa process to enter the country and poor perceptions of treatment by pistol-toting and often stern-faced immigration officials on arrival.

In a survey conducted by the travel industry lobby group the Discover America Partnership late last year, the United States' scored more than twice as badly as the next region, the Middle East, in terms of travel friendliness.

Two-thirds of respondents worried they could be held back at airports because of a mistake in form filling or a misstatement to immigration officials. Half said officials were rude and that they feared them more than the threat of terrorism or crime.

For many foreign tourists and business travelers, the anxiety surrounding the entry process makes rival destinations in Europe, Asia and Africa more attractive to visit than the United States.

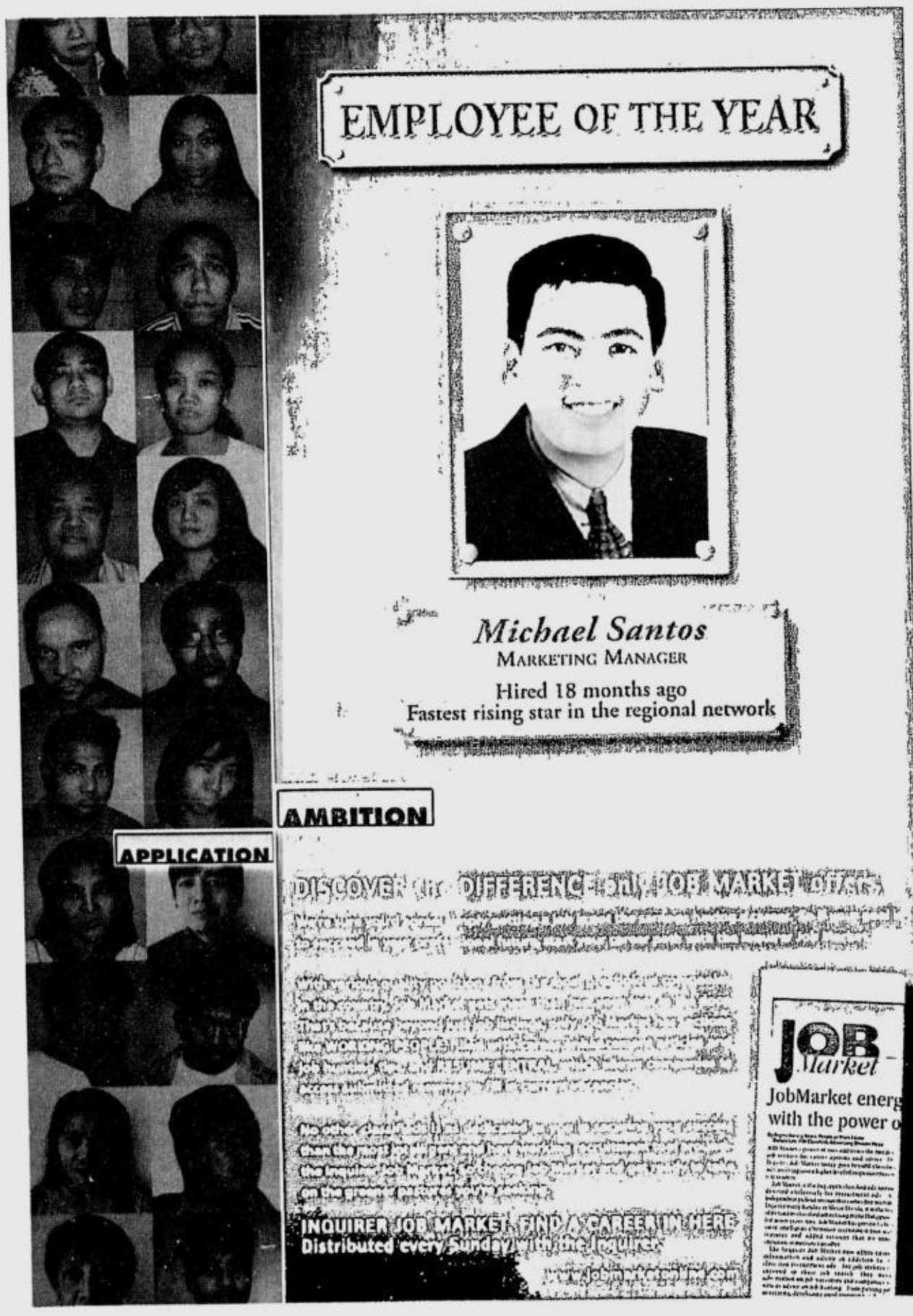
"There are other places you can go where you don't get treated badly at immigration and ports of entry," British visitor Mitchel Lenson told Reuters as he stood on a windswept promontory overlooking the Grand Canyon.

"The assumption (in the United States) is 'you must be a criminal, so we'll treat you that way,'" he added.

Travel industry sources say the frosty welcome is not just driving tourists away but also business travelers from overseas, foreign students and even foreigners seeking medical care in US clinics and hospitals.

Geoff Freeman, the executive director of the Washington-based Discover America Partnership, says the decline is costing the increasingly service-led US economy dearly.

"(It) harms our economic security," he said in a telephone interview. "As the number of foreign visitors falls we lose billions of dollars in spending, billions in tax revenues and hundreds of thousands of jobs," he added. *Reuters*



After crown princess, Japan's empress falls victim to stress

TOKYO—IT'S NOT EASY BEING A WOMAN in Japan's royal family.

Four years after Crown Princess Masako dropped most of her official duties to recover from what officials say is a form of depression brought about by the pressures of adjusting to life in the palace, Empress Michiko is now suffering from a wide array of symptoms stemming from severe stress.

Officials announced last week that Michiko, 72, is canceling her schedule for the time being to recover from intestinal bleeding, nose bleeds and mouth ulcers. She had been feeling ill since catching a cold last month, the palace said.

The empress' illness highlights both the pressures and secrecies of Japan's royal family, which is believed to be the oldest in the world but has fallen on hard times in recent years because of a succession crisis and, more recently, some bad press.

"It is believed that the empress is suffering from symptoms related to psychological stress," said Ichiro Kanazawa, the palace's chief medical supervisor. Officials said they believed recent coverage of the royal family might be to blame.

Officials have not said what specifically might have upset the empress.

But the palace has recently been in an uproar over the publication of a book on the royal family by Australian author Ben Hills. The book, "Princess Masako: Prisoner of the Chrysanthemum Throne," has been slammed by the palace as disrespectful, and a Japanese publisher announced last month it decided to scrap plans to translate it into Japanese.

The book alleges that Masako has also been under intense pressure from the palace bureaucracy to conform to its traditions, keep a low profile and forego trips abroad until she bears a son. Hills also wrote about growing tensions between members of the imperial family itself, largely generated by the pressure on Masako to produce an imperial heir.

Japan's Imperial Household Agency and Foreign Ministry have demanded an apology from Hills for "disrespectful descriptions, distortions of facts and judgmental assertions with audacious conjectures and coarse logic." The government also protested to Random House in Sydney.

Books critical of the royal family and its palace handlers are rare in Japan.

Criticizing the emperor—once revered as a living god—was regarded as a serious crime in the first half of the 20th century and there is still a strong tradition in Japan of respect for the royal family, which is zealously shielded from view by secretive palace officials.

JAPANESE Empress Michiko AP

This was not the first time that Michiko has withdrawn after being criticized in the media.

In the early 1990s, she was unable to speak for months after suffering a nervous breakdown, reportedly over unflattering stories in gossip-oriented magazines. The stories were relatively mild by comparison with what might regularly be found in the British press. Michiko was portrayed as demanding and sometimes curt with her staff.

Years earlier, Michiko, the commoner daughter of a wealthy merchant, is believed to have been severely taunted by former aristocrats, many of whom were part of the palace bureaucracy, after she wed Emperor Akihito, who was then crown prince.

Crown Princess Masako, Michiko's daughter-in-law, is also recuperating from stress-induced health problems brought on by the pressures of palace life.

Masako, 43, withdrew from virtually all of her public duties four years ago after being diagnosed with a stress-induced illness called "adjustment disorder."

A well-liked former diplomat who was educated at Harvard and Oxford, Masako had been under intense pressure to have a baby boy to succeed Crown Prince Naruhito as the next heir to the throne.

After their marriage in 1993, however, she suffered a miscarriage in 1999 and then had a daughter, Aiko, in 2001. *AP*

WHAT'S INSIDE

Canas stops Federer win streak /A24

SPORTS

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Mavericks shame Phil, Lakers /A24

Who's afraid of Jorge Solis?

Not Pacquiao, but unbeaten Mexican may prove to be a tough nut come fight night

By Roy Luarca

HE'S NO SUPERSTAR, BUT HE'S no pushover either, judging by his unscathed fight record.

Jorge "Coloradito" Solis, the latest in the serioes of Mexicans seeking the scalp of Manny Pacquiao, is as dangerous as any of the touted fighters the Filipino boxing hero and World Boxing Council International super featherweight titlist have traded punches with.

But Pacquiao—after watching a video of Solis' last fight against Fernando Lizarraga on Jan. 25—seems ready to dismiss Solis as a worthy adversary. He fights the Mexican on April 14 at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas.

Pacquiao, according to some accounts, did not even find it necessary to see the full five rounds Solis took to beat Lizarraga on Jan. 25 in Las Vegas.

He senses no danger, no urgency to fast-track his training that is already behind schedule, according to a report that quoted Justin Fortune, Pacquiao's trainer-in-waiting at the Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles.

'Treat Solis with caution'

Some boxing pundits, including two-time Trainer of the Year Freddie Roach, back Fortune's fears. Roach went on to say last month that Pacquiao should treat Solis "with caution."

JORGE SOLIS: A thinking fighter with snapping jabs, 1-2-3 combinations and jarring rights.

They also pointed out that, at 27, Solis is at his prime and—based on his untarnished record of 32 wins, 23 by way of knockout, and two draws—packs a wallop.

In moving his departure from Gen. Santos City for Los Angeles to March 17, Pacquiao, they said, will not be able to meet the standard eight-week regimen required for a tough battle.

Roach, Pacquiao's longtime trainer who is in Puerto Rico supervising Oscar De La Hoya's preparations for his May 5 bout against Floyd Mayweather Jr., told veteran boxing analyst Ronnie Nathanielz in a phone conversation: "It's (Pacquiao-Solis) a dangerous fight. There is no such thing as an easy fight."

Consider, too, that at 5-foot-10 Solis towers over Pacquiao who is 5-6 1/2, and has a longer reach.

Although his previous opponents were nowhere near the mold of countrymen and Pacquiao victims like Erik Morales and Marco Antonio Barrera, Solis has built a reputation to attract the attention of Top Rank honcho Bob Arum.

After all, Solis was Mexico's super bantam champion in 2001 and featherweight titlist since 2003. Currently, he is ranked No. 2 by the WBC and No. 4 by the World Boxing Organization.

Impressive amateur record

At 16, Solis started his boxing career in his hometown of Guadalajara and compiled an impressive 33-3 record as an amateur.

After bulking up his wiry frame, Solis, older brother of International Boxing Federation light flyweight champion Ulises, turned pro on Feb. 6, 1998 and made his mark right away by beating Bernardo Tule by technical knockout.

Thus far, his most recognizable opponent is current WBC interim featherweight champion Humberto Soto, whom he fought in 2004. After a clash of heads in the first round, the fight was declared a no-contest in the third round.

Vulnerable at the middle

It is highly suspect also whether Solis, a natural at 126 pounds, can withstand the power of Pacquiao's punches, which have floored 34 of his 43 victims.

By moving up to the 130-lb division, Solis may be presumably brittle and is likely to be vulnerable at the middle, which is one of Pacquiao's favorite targets apart from the head.

And, if scouting reports are true that he lacks footwork and does not run much, then Solis should find himself in trouble once Pacquaio tags and nails him at the corner.

That is if Pacquiao hits peak form in time for the pay-per-view spectacle expected to rake in millions of dollars in revenues.

On the plus side, Solis is regarded as a thinking fighter with snapping jabs, 1-2-3 combinations and jarring rights. He is one who studies his opponents thoroughly, their style and their power, and then adjusts as the fight wears on.

It's unlikely, however, that he's been hit by the same hammer that Pacquiao wields in both fists.

ELEVEN players, including an ailing Danny Seigle, show up for the RP team's first practice session, with four more joining them in the next few days. AUGUST DE LA CRUZ

RP cagers hold first practice; Seigle feels good about squad

By Musong R. Castillo

DANNY SEIGLE, NURSING A FEVER and all, watched from the sidelines as the other members of the crack Philippine squad loosened up for their first practice session yesterday.

He was not in it at that moment, but the 6-foot-7 San Miguel Beer forward still could not hide his excitement.

"I have a good feeling about this team," Seigle, whose first RP team stint came in the Sultan's Cup in Brunei last year, told the INQUIRER. "We got the pieces in place and I think with that, we can compete at a high level."

Coach Chot Reyes presided over the first practice of the team, one which will go on for six days a week until March 28, a day before the Nationals fly to Los Angeles for a two-week training camp.

There, the RP team could get its first look at mighty China, with the Chinese also having been enrolled in the camp starting April 1.

Scrimmages with the Defenders, Los Angeles' team in the NBDL (National Basketball Development League), have also been scheduled for "Team Pilipinas."

Yesterday's session at the Moro Lorenzo gym inside the Ateneo de Manila campus in Katipunan was star-studded to say the least, but assistant coach Norman Black said this squad is different to the ones assembled for national duty before.

"The guys that are here really want to be here," said Black, who coached a similarly all-star squad in the Hiroshima Asian Games. "Unlike before, when we saw some hesitancy on the part of some of the players.

"If we can jell, there are a very few teams in Asia that can beat us."

COACH Chot Reyes plans the day's workout (above) with his wards. On the left, members of the national basketball team limber up before a brisk run at the Moro Lorenzo Gym on the Ateneo de Manila University campus in Loyola Heights, Quezon City. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Four set to join later

Eleven players showed up for work yesterday, with four—Barangay Ginebra standouts Jay-Jay Helterbrand, Rafi Reavis, Rudy Hatfield and Mark Caguioa—set to join the team this week.

Asi Taulava, Mick Pennisi, Jimmy Alapag, Ren-Ren Ritualo, Dondon Hontiveros, Enrico Villanueva, Kerby Raymundo, Tony Dela Cruz, Rommel Adducul and Ranidel de Ocampo were present.

Helterbrand is scheduled to return today from South Carolina, Reavis and Caguioa will fly in later in the week, also from the US, while Hatfield is attending regular practice with his mother ballclub.

Meanwhile, the Southeast Asian Basketball Association championship will be held in Thailand on May 24 to 28, according to PBA commissioner Noli Eala.

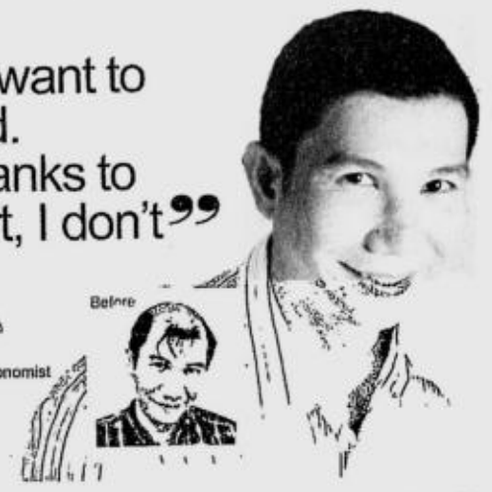
Eala received a letter from Fiba-Asia chair Dato Yeoh informing the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas on the venue for the Seaba, which will be held in the city of Ratchaburi.

The Seaba is the qualifier for the Fiba-Asia tournament in Tokoshima, Japan, where the Philippines hopes to land at least in second spot to be able to qualify for the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, China.

LONG JOURNEY TO FIBA-ASIA TOURNAMENT

March 13—Arrival of Jay-Jay Helterbrand
March 17—Arrival of Mark Caguioa
March 28—End of first RP training
March 29—Departure for Los Angeles, California for two-week training
April 1—Chinese team to also arrive in training camp
April 12—End of US training
April—10-day European sojourn to play teams there
May 21-24—Seaba Championship, Thailand
June—Qatar invitational tournament
July—Four-nation invitational tournament in Manila
July 28-Aug. 4—Fiba-Asia, Tokoshima, Japan

"I didn't want to look old. And thanks to Nu/Hart, I don't"



PHILIP MOLEÑO
Prominent CPA-Economist

I wasn't really that bald before, but my father was bald and I knew it could happen to me as well. Sometimes when I saw my old friends and classmates, they would say "oh, you're already balding." I had to do something about it. The earlier, the better.

I've been hearing about Nu/Hart and after learning more about them on TV in Cebu, I wanted to visit the clinic for a free consultation. So I did the next time I was in Manila, and they explained the procedure to me in detail. I scheduled myself for a procedure right then and there.

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Harbour Centre snags five more college hotshots

By Jasmine W. Payo

COLLEGIATE HOTSHOTS SEEMED TO have made a beeline for PBL back-to-back champion Harbour Centre.

Philippine Christian University stars Jason Castro and Beau Belga have hardly warmed up for Harbour Centre when the team snagged four standouts from 2006 UAAP champion University of Santo Tomas and a veteran from La Salle.

Batang Pier, the new moniker of Harbour Centre, earned the playing rights to UAAP Finals Most Valuable Player Jojo Duncil, Dylan Ababou, Japs Cuan and June Dizon, plus Archers point guard TY Tang following the dispersal draft of players from disbanded Kettle Korn-UST and TeleTech.

DUNCIL

ABABOU

TANG

DIZON

Team manager Erick Arejola said, however, that Harbour Centre is still awaiting word from school officials if the five new recruits would be allowed to play in the coming 2007 Unity Cup.

Defending NCAA champion San Beda and UAAP powerhouse University of the East have recently recalled their players to focus on their collegiate campaigns.

PCU likewise pulled out its seven players from Hapee, but a week later, Silver Cup MVP Castro and Belga jumped ship to Harbour Centre.

Batang Pier already boasts an intimidating cast bannered by JC Intal of Ateneo, Ryan Araña and Jerwin Gaco of La Salle, Edwin Asoro and Jonathan Fernandez of National University and last conference's Finals MVP Chico Lanete.

In the recent dispersal draft, Silver Cup runner-up Hapee picked UST's Anthony Espiritu and Jun Cortez along with veteran Francis Mercado.

Toyota Balintawak acquired Eugene Tan and Paul Guerrero, while Mail and More selected Josh Uzbintondo, Kim Valenzuela, Frederick Hubalde, McDonald Santos and Warren de Guzman.

Sista opted for Don Villamin, Rob Labagala, Mark Canlas, Dennis Concha and Jay Sierra; Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala got Ariel Capus, Mel Latoreno, JR Estrada and Jose Magdadaro; and Magnolia chose Al Magpayo, Alfie Grijaldo, Chester Taylor, Francis Allera and Axel Doruelo.

Harbour Centre, the 2006 Unity Cup and 2007 Silver Cup titleholder, will vie for its third straight championship starting April 10.

Frankie slips to 5th in Asian money chase

FILIPINO LEGEND FRANKIE MIÑOZA dropped to fifth in the Asian Tour's money race over the weekend after China's Liang Wenchong nailed a breakthrough win in the rich Clariden Leu Singapore Masters.

After setting the Order of Merit pace by winning the $300,000 Philippine Open last month, Miñoza has been on a tailspin with Liang the latest to overtake him after winning $183,330 in Singapore and jumping to second overall.

South African Anton Haig is now the new OOM leader with $426,035 in earnings, the bulk of which coming from the rich Johnnie Walker Classic recently in Phuket, Thailand, where Miñoza missed making the cut.

Miñoza, who also finished second in the Indonesian Open, has $150,442 in winnings.

Former RP Open champ Gerald Rosales was the only other Filipino in the Top 20, occupying 17th spot with $57,862.

The Chinese ace, who has a very awkward, baseball swing-like finish, now has a total of $273,747 in winnings for the year, though he surprised everyone in the post-tournament press conference that he would donate his Clariden winnings for golf development in China *(See related story on A24)*.

"I hope the winnings from this time—as it's much more—will encourage our society to give us more support," said Liang, who became just the second Chinese to win in a European Tour sanctioned event. "I hope more youngsters (in China) will pick up the sport."

Zhang Lianwei, Liang's mentor, was the first Chinese winner in the Tour, also ruling the Clariden in 2003.

The Asian Tour moves to China for the first time this season for the US$1 million TCL Classic at Yalong Bay Golf Club in Sanya, Hainan Island, this week. The event is jointly sanctioned by the Asian Tour and European Tour.

Malaysian Iain Steel, whom Liang turned back in the playoff, was in third spot with $176,356, followed by Englishman Simon Dyson with $176,240. *Musong R. Castillo*

RORY HOMILLADA

FRANKIE MIÑOZA: On a tailspin after a tournament-busy fortnight.

3 prodigious teeners make up youngest Sirikit squad

TEENERS DOTTIE ARDINA, CRYSTAL SUperal and Regina de Guzman make up the youngest team ever to represent the Philippines in the Asia-Pacific Ladies Invitational golf team championship slated March 21-23 at The Country Club in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

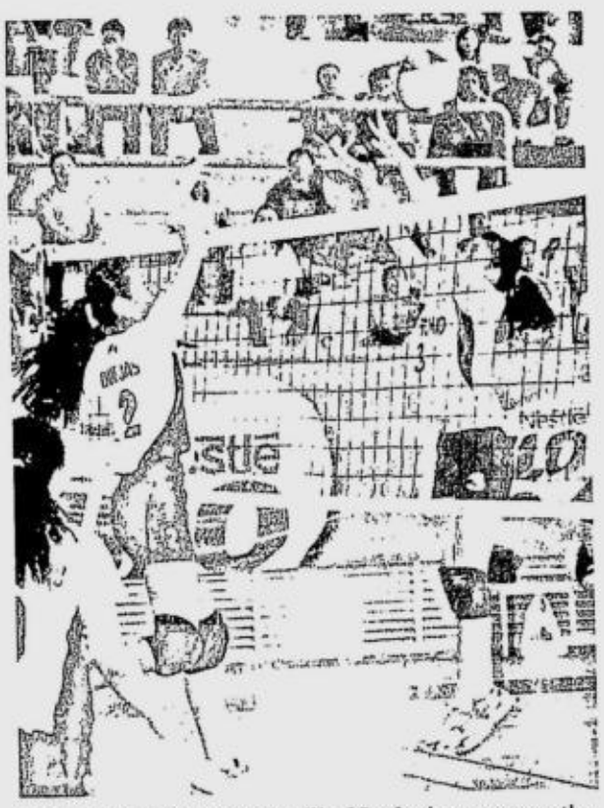
With an average age of slightly over 14 years, the trio will be battling the likes of regional powers South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and Japan in the 14-nation event also known as the Queen Sirikit Cup.

"We feel that this is the best trio that we can send and we're hoping that they will be up to the challenge," said Gina Tuason, president of the organizing Women's Golf Association of the Philippines, after naming the team members recently.

The Kiwis are the defending champions, while the Koreans also loom as a force after romping off with the gold in the 2006 Asian Games in Doha.

Asiad gold medalist So Yeon-ryu will spearhead the Korean bid while Yupaporn Kawinpakorn, winner of the Philippine Ladies Open last month, will be leading the Thailand contingent.

The 15-year-old Superal will be the only remnant of the squad which finished fifth last year in Adelaide, Australia, although much of the Philippines' hopes falls on the 13-year-old Ardina, who won more than a dozen local and international tournaments last year.


SIX-FOOTER Eileen Quejas (2) of St. Anthony presses the attack, but St. Scholastica still put her efforts to naught.

St. Scho, CSA spikers repeat as Best champs

SEASONED ST. SCHOLASTICA'S COLlege, with Fille St. Merced Cainglet at the firing end, ripped School of St. Anthony, 25-9, 24-26, 25-11, 25-8, over the weekend to put away the high school competitive division crown of the Best Center-Women's Volleyball League (WVL) for the second straight year.

Later named as the division's Most Valuable Player, Cainglet powered St. Scholastica's offense as the Scions survived a second-set loss to prevail with plenty to spare.

Colegio de San Agustin was also a repeat champ, annihilating Miriam College, 25-14, 25-13, for the elementary competitive division of the 44-team event presented by Milo.

Ingrid Juliene Reyes of San Agustin was adjudged elementary competitive MVP, with Baesa Adventist Elementary School's Mary Kate Usi nailing the same award in the elementary developmental division after leading BAES to the title past Assumption College, 25-14, 25-15.

La Salle College of Antipolo topped the high school developmental side following a 26-24, 25-21 triumph over St. Joseph School of Fairview. LSCA stalwart Anna Maria del Mundo was adjudged MVP in the division.

Bagging third place after victories over separate foes were Southville International (elementary developmental), St. Scholastica (elementary competitive), New Era University (high school developmental), and San Antonio de Padua College (high school competitive).

Now on its 12th year, the tournament gathers the best teams from the grade school and high school divisions to compete in a spirit of true sportsmanship and amateurism. *With Musong R. Castillo*

SPORTSWATCH

Lady Patriots put away volley crown

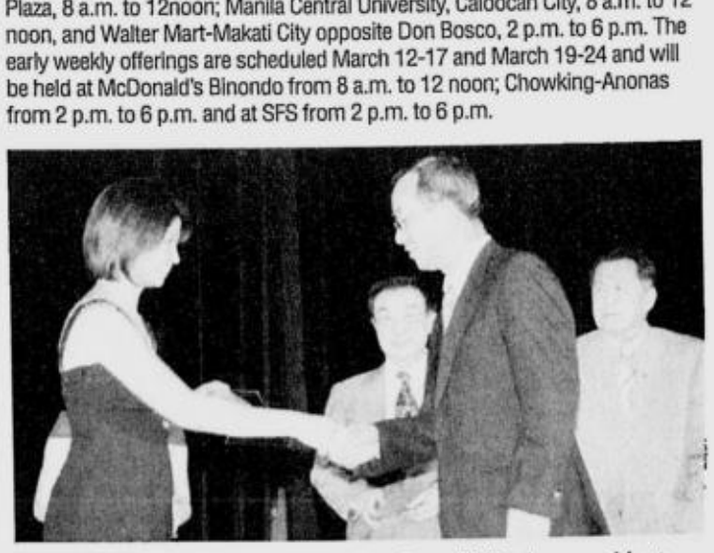
ROOKIE-LADEN DE LA SALLE-DASMARIÑAS WARDED OFF POLYTECHNIC University of the Philippines, 26-24, 25-17, 25-19, recently to clinch the women's crown of the 14th Petron-NCRAA Volleyball Tournament at the PUP gym. The Lady Patriots pounced on the Lady Maroons' string of reception errors in the final set en route to their fourth straight crown under coach Jasmine Bacolod. La Salle finished the title series, 2-1. "We really wanted this championship," Bacolod said. PUP took Game 1, 25-22, 24-26, 25-14, 25-15, but La Salle levelled the series with a 25-23, 25-17, 19-25, 24-26, 15-13 Game 2 win.

Masco, GAB chiefs head PSA Forum guests

MANILA SPORTS COUNCIL (MASCO) CHIEF ARNOLD "ALI" ATIENZA AND Games and Amusements Board (GAB) chair Eric Buhain will talk about the planned revival of the boxing event Fiesta Fistiana in tomorrow's session of the PSA Forum at the main function room of the Pantalan Restaurant in Manila. GAB boxing chief Dr. Nasser Cruz joins Atienza and Buhain in the public sports program aired live over dzSR Sports Radio 918 and sponsored by Pagcor, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and Masco. The staging of the 2007 Fiesta Fistiana is a joint project between the PSA and Masco, in cooperation with GAB.

Checkmate summer chess clinics listing starts

ENROLLMENT FOR THE MILO CHECKMATE SUMMER CHESS CLINICS IS now ongoing at the Metropolitan Chess Club headquarters at St. Francis Square (SFS) at the back of SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City. The clinics will officially start on March 26-31 and will be conducted at the following venues and time slots: San Beda-Alabang, 8 a.m. to 12 noon; SFS, 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.; Chowking-Anonas, Quezon City, 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.; Jollibee-Harrison Plaza, 8 a.m. to 12noon; Manila Central University, Caloocan City, 8 a.m. to 12 noon, and Walter Mart-Makati City opposite Don Bosco, 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. The early weekly offerings are scheduled March 12-17 and March 19-24 and will be held at McDonald's Binondo from 8 a.m. to 12 noon; Chowking-Anonas from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and at SFS from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.


MOTORSPORTS PILLAR: Fujitsu Ten Corp. Philippines president Masahiko Enoki (front, right) receives the Golden Wheel plaque of appreciation from Carmona Circuit Philippines CEO Lot M. Tan, in recognition of his company's contribution to the development of local motorsports, during the recent Golden Wheel awards at the Pagcor Airport Casino Filipino in Parañaque. Waiting for their turn to receive the same plaque are Yokohama Tires Phils. president Takuji Asano and Boy Ochoa (right), motorsports director of San Miguel Corp.

Horseracing in disarray

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

THE HORSERACING INDUSTRY IS FALLING apart. For example, many big-time horse owners, unhappy with the new handicapping system of the Philippine Racing Commission which will be implemented on April 1, recently boycotted the races.

In my opinion, a boycott won't help solve the problem of horseracing in the country. Why did I say that? Because a boycott of the races is not healthy. Pretty soon, the sport loses; the country's two racing clubs (Santa Ana Park in Makati City and San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite) as well as the betting public will lose. Everyone loses.

The Philracom should nip this boycott in the budd. For starters, the agency, headed by retired police general Florencio Fianza, should hold a summit among the direct players of the industry—the horse owners-breeders, jockeys, trainers and officials of both racing clubs.

This summit could very well serve as a unifying force for the various sectors of the industry, which have often been fragmented and at odds over conflicting parochial interests.

The new handicapping system for all incoming two-year-old (2YO) horses is set to be enforced on April 1. The new system prohibits all juveniles who will start their career on April 3 and beyond from going down to lower classification groups.

While there, each horse will be made to run only one maiden race—win or lose—before falling into their respective brackets, the winners and the placers in one group and the nonplacers in the other.

The 58-year-old Fianza is new in the job and, given his lack of experience, will be facing a tough task in solving the problem confronting the industry. The industry's image has become tarnished by rumors of graft and corruption, the proliferation of illegal bookies, the rampant fixing of races, among other anomalies.

As I have said before, I have no problem with Fianza's appointment as long as he sincerely loves and understands the sport. The *bayang karerista* and I expect him to lead the Philracom to greater heights. He is not just a Philracom chair who throws his weight around because of his closeness to Malacañang.

***

There is no question that the victory of Ronnie Alcano in the recent World 8-Ball Championship in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates, has further strengthened the Philippines' clout in international billiards. Alcano is another Bata Reyes in the making, a worthy successor to the greatest Filipino billiards player of all time.

A native of Calamba, Laguna, the 34-year-old Alcano, already the winner of the World Pool 9-Ball Championship last year at the PICC, duplicated the feat of Taiwanese teen sensation Wu Chia-ching, who at 16 became both world champion in 8-ball and 9-ball in 2005.

Why is it that he's so good like his idol Bata Reyes? It's because the 5-foot-11 Alcano has uncanny skills with the cue stick, a vast international exposure and coolness under pressure.

And like Bata Reyes, Alcano was born poor; spent many, many years sleeping on pool tables and failed to finish high school. Still, billiards opened great opportunities for him and he became a millionaire many times over in the process.

Alcano first rose to prominence in 2001 when he won the San Miguel Beer Rising Stars of 9-Ball Tournament, beating veteran internationalist Edgar Acaba in the finals. Campaigning in the United States, he was chosen 2002 Rookie of the Year by Azbilliards.com, the leading billiards website in America.

In Manila. Alcano won the fourth and final leg of the 2005 SMB Asian 9-Ball Tour, defeating highly fancied Yang Chin-shun of Chinese Taipei at the Robinsons Galleria.

Yen Makabenta, chair of the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines was all praise for Alcano's latest win while BSCP president Ernie Fajardo predicted another banner year for Philippine billiards.

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Conquistadors-dream (7), Thor Azura (4), Loveable Dolly (6), Fordest Time (8), Shemarjoh (2)

Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—En Gedi (1), Road Runner (2), Concorde (3), I Miss You (6)

Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Touch Of Glory (8), Cool N'Sazzy (2), Conqqreetly (7), Twin Spires (1)

Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Grand Fiesta (7), Strong Boy (1), Mes Monique (3), Step on the Gas (5), Pay To See/Red Fancy (4)

Race 5—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Dazzling Affair (2), Rock Attack Attack (9), Jaw Breaker (7), Majestic Queen (8), Tanging Ikaw (1), Beat D'Heat (11)

Race 6—(Angie Gray (7), Idol (3), Xtreme Heat (4), Shipman (2)

Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Weekened Master (6), Caden Dance (3)

Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Real Material (5), Magic Bullet (3), Noble Principality (1), Ocean Dignity (4), Valiant Queeen (10), Canta Libre (6)

Keon: Choose right athletes, back them fully

'RP can win first Olympic gold'

By June Navarro

LAOAG CITY—IDENTIFY THE ATHLETES AND THROW IN ALL THE MONEY needed for their training.

Michael Keon, the most powerful figure in sports in the waning years of the Marcos administration, offered this piece of advice to the present sports leadership. He said these are the key in the country's bid to snare the country's first-ever gold medal in the Olympics.

"If I'm in their shoes, that's exactly what I'll do," said Keon, the father of the Project: Gintong Alay program which produced the likes of Lydia De Vega-Mercado, hailed as the fastest woman in Asia during the '80s.

"Once you identified the athletes, isolate them," he added. "They (sports leaders) should really do that to get them away from the distractions, away from the politics."

Keon, however, cautioned that politics might get in the way and hamper the training of the athletes, one of the many reasons why corporate funding comes only like a drop in the bucket.

"Make sure they have the best coaches, the best nutrition and the best of everything the government and private sectors could offer," he said.

"Get the business community involved. But the business community will only get involved if they believe their money will be handled properly," Keon said.

"If sports could be handled really very well, you could get so much money."

The athletic director of Ilocos Sur has also identified taekwondo and boxing as the country's best bets in the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

"But between the two, taekwondo has a better chance of winning the gold (in the Olympics)," said Keon.

Taekwondo won a pair of silver medals in the Doha Asian Games last year where the Filipinos were pitted against the world's best in the Korean combat sport.

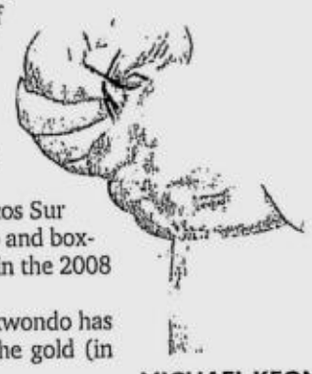
Boxing got a pair of golds in the Asiad, but the toughest opposition from Cuba, Mexico, Africa and the eastern European block was not there.

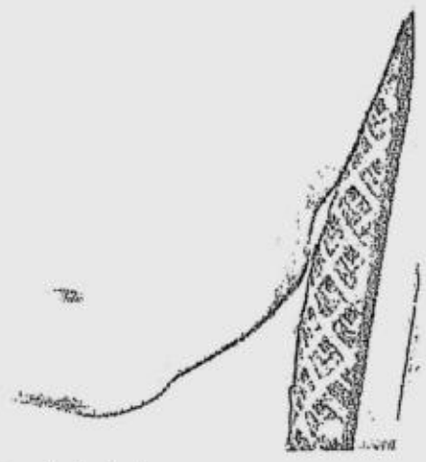
"Sayang talaga. Imagine, we're just one of the few countries left without a gold medal in the Olympics," said Keon.

The nephew of the late President Ferdinand Marcos is also betting on gymnastics and football as the disciplines in which Filipinos can excel in the long run.

"Gymnastics and football could do well," said Keon. "In gymnastics, all you need is flexibility and rhythm while football requires great dancing skills and we Filipinos love to dance."

While the country's taekwondo-jins could hone their skills in Korea where the sport actually originated, Keon said the national boxers should be sent to as many international tournaments as possible.





MICHAEL KEON: That is what I will do if I am in their shoes.

Embattled RP golfers hit depths Down Under

BAYRON: 40th place

JAY BAYRON FAILED to recover his bearing and fumbled with 74 and 76 in the last two rounds to settle for joint 40th place in the Riversdale Cup topped by Tim Stewart of New South Wales at the Riversdale Golf Club in Melbourne, Australia on Monday.

Bayron, who shot a 69 in the second round, muffed several crucial putts in the third and fourth rounds that would have given him a crack at a top 15 finish in Australia's premier 72-hole amateur championship.

With a five-over-par 293, Bayron wound up tied with two others in 40th spot in the 63-player field of survivors.

Stewart leaned on a solid third-round score of 68 to wrest the lead from two-day leader Queensland's Andrew Dodt, then went on to win the individual crown by one shot despite a 75 in the final 18 holes.

Dodt wavered with a 76 on the third day and fell short with his closing 68. He settled for second place at 280, two shots clear of Matthew Griffin of Victoria who had a final-round 68.

Filipino Miko Alejandro, had 77 and 75 to finish with a 299 while Michael Bibat skied to 79 and 78 for a 303.

Anthony Fernando, who also had a 69 in the second round, struggled with 75 and 79 and wound up with a 304 total.

The tandem of Bayron and Bibat also finished with 596 in team play, topped by Steawart's New South Wales, which had a 565 for a one-shot victory over West Australia, which pooled a 566.

DUATHLETES: From the street to the mall

Round-the-mall duathlon set at Festival April 29

ATHLETES RACE AROUND THE MALL FOR the first time locally in a duathlon competition slated April 29 at the Festival Supermall in Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

The 1st Festival Supermall Run and Bike Attack is open to the public.

The Triathlon Association of the Philippines (TRAP) said the race may serve as a fresh challenge for professional athletes and a new form of workout for weekend warriors.

TRAP officials added that the event aims to introduce the run-bike-run competition to more athletes and spectators.

Race registration and activity launch will be held at 2 p.m. on March 17 at the Carousel Court inside Festival Supermall.

For further information, call Festival Supermall Customer Service at 850-3514.

Festival Supermall is located at Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang. *Jasmine W. Payo*

11th Harris Cup blasts off Friday

THE 11TH PAUL HARRIS CUP, A TOURNAment honoring the founding father of the Rotary Club, tees off Friday at Alabang Golf Club.

Championships in the team and individual categories will be disputed in the 18-hole event organized by the Rotary Club of Makati Ayala. The peoria method of scoring will be applied.

Organizing committee chair and incoming Makati Ayala president Bernard Poplimont said tournament proceeds will benefit Makati Ayala's various community service projects.

Tournament format calls for each team to field four or more players with only the top four scores to count for the team score. Individual championships will be disputed in classes A, B, C and the guest division.

Paul Harris was born on April 19, 1868 in Racine, Wisconsin. In 1905, as a young lawyer in Chicago, he founded a club for men.

RP rowers, gymnasts lobby for more events

By Marc Anthony Reyes

DRAGONBOAT AND GYMNASTICS JUST BEcame the latest national sports associations lobbying for more events to be included in the Southeast Asian Games in Thailand this December.

Both victims of drastic cuts in the number of events, the NSAs yesterday expressed hopes they are gaining support to convince the SEAG Federation Council to include events that were in the Philippines' 2005 SEAG but were taken off this year's edition.

Dragonboat secretary general Nestor Ilagan said they have the backing of Myanmar, Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam when it comes to adding more events to the two already lined up.

"We still didn't know which events were retained, but we know there are only two left," Ilagan told the INQUIRER. "Probably there is only one event for men and one for women."

The Philippines swept the six dragonboat gold medals disputed during the SEAG two years ago, namely the men's 10-A Side 500-meter, 10-A Side 1,000m, 20-A Side 500m, 20-A Side 1,000, and women's 10-A Side 500m and 10-A Side 1,000.

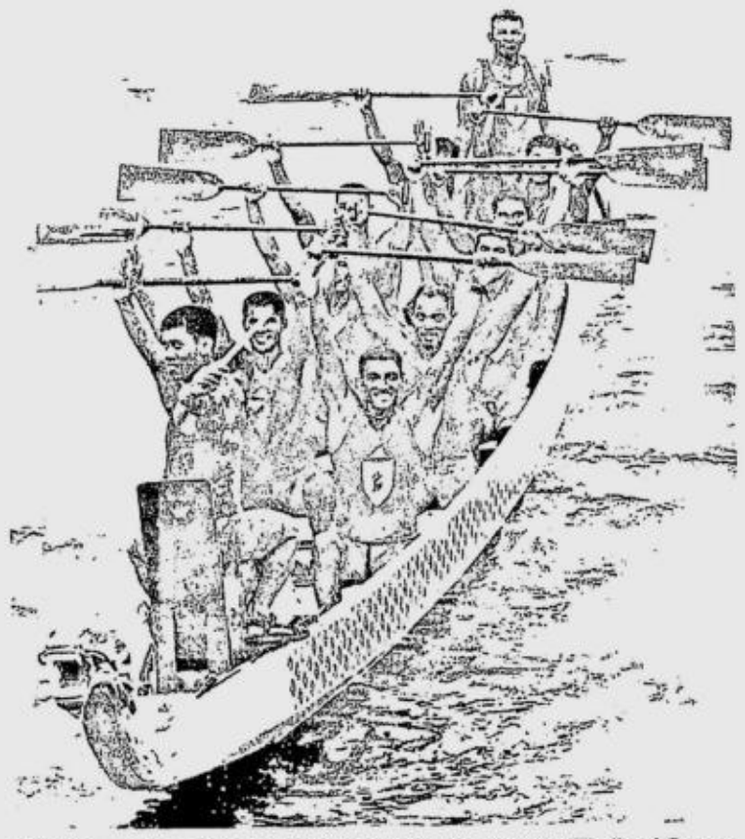
Though the Philippines only won one gold in the 2005 SEAG, the gymnastics association is still hoping the federation would reconsider its decision to exclude women's individual artistic events.

Also hoping to squeeze a few more events in the SEAG calendar is billiards and snooker after the pool events got slashed from eight to four.

The country, powered by world pool champion Ronato Alcano, snared seven of the eight golds staked in pool events two years ago.

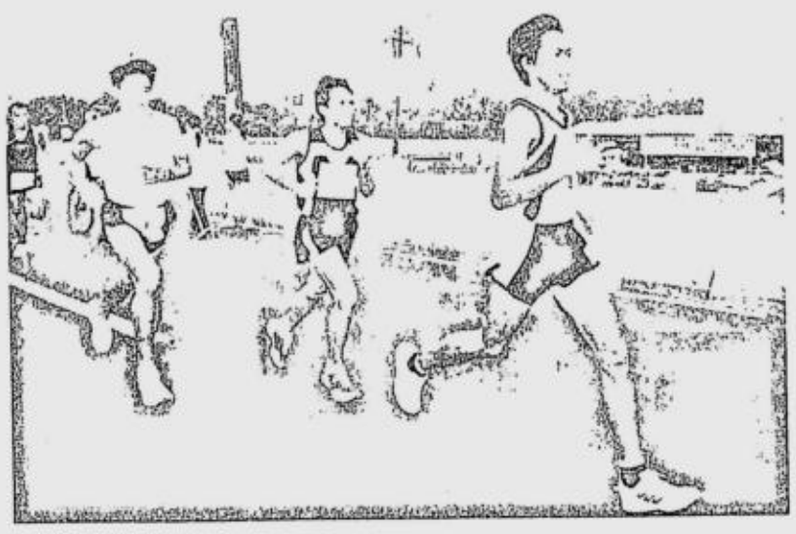
Snooker, where the Thais are expected to perform well, also increased its event with the inclusion of a few speed snooker events, according to the RP SEAG Task Force.

The Thai SEAG will feature events that were either not held here in 2005 or the defending champion Philippines doesn't compete in. These are futsal, handball, rugby, duathlon and field hockey.



MANY members of the RP team may not make it to the Thailand Games if their events are not reinstated in the SEAG calendar. JOAN BONDOC

De Asis tops King of the Road with flourish



JUJET de Asis (left) makes his move against early leader Bernardo Desamito (1) and Alquin Bolivar at the Kalayaan Flyover heading back to Bonifacio Global City in Sunday's Adidas King of the Road 10K race.

JUJET DE ASIS GAVE ONE FINAL PUSH IN the last two kilometers to rule the 10K Metro Manila leg of the Adidas King of the Road recently at the Bonifacio Global City in Taguig.

De Asis, a member of the Philippine Army, lagged behind the lead pack before surging in the final stretch to clock 28 minutes and 41 seconds.

Maricel Maquilan of the University of the East topped the distaff side in 34:21

Maquilan edged out schoolmate and reigning UAAP Most Valuable Player Emma Mangago, who came in 21 seconds later in 34:42.

"When we were at the (Kalayaan) flyover, that's when I got ahead of (Bernardo) Desamito and (Reynaldo) Delos Reyes; I also left Alquin (Bolivar) going to the finish line," De Asis said in Filipino.

De Asis and Maquilan pocketed P10,000 cash and P10,000 worth of Adidas gift certificates each.

Bolivar, who finished second in 28:52, topped the men's 20-29 age group to win P1,000 worth gift certificates. Desamito, meanwhile, ruled the 30-39 age category with a record of 29:12.

Race organizer Rudy Biscoho said 3,119 runners vied in the 10K race and 3K side event.

Other 10K age group winners were Michael Canillo and Cinderella Agana in the 13-19; Genevieve dela Pena in the 30-39; Hernandito Pineda and Daisy Castilllon in the 40-49; and Cris Agaoili and Patricia Hill in the 50-above.

The 3K age group winners included Norman Apolinar and Michelle De Vera in the 6-9; Fernan Nakila and Rosebelle Advincula in the 10-13; and Crisanto Aclo and Corazon Salcedo in the 14-above.

Adidas Philippines Inc. sports marketing manager Goody Custodio said the season finale is on June 17 also at the Global City.

Peña lone Filipino in Aussie F1 support races

FILIPINO ASIAN FORMULA THREE STANDout Dado Peña will be among a record field of 31 international drivers seeing action in the Melbourne Formula One support races this week, and he is confident he can give the other entries a run for their money.

"My expectations are to be on the podium in all races and, if possible, win a couple," said Peña.

"Being the only Filipino (in the field) is obviously very special. Hopefully, I can make the Philippines proud and prove to all that Filipinos have what it takes."

The Melbourne race is the opening leg of this year's F1 season and will be held at the Albert Park Grand Prix Circuit. The support races where Peña is vying will feature other top F3 racers from Italy, Austria, New Zealand, China, Finland, Indonesia, Sweden and Australia.

"This weekend is very important and we need to make zero mistakes," said Peña, a business administration major at the University of San Francisco who will drive for Scud Racing-Cooltemp, one of the top F3 teams in Australia.

Although Peña has never raced at the Albert Park Grand Prix Circuit, he has been familiarizing himself with the twists and turns of the 5.303-kilometer street circuit using a computer program, a common practice among drivers.

Testing will be allowed on the track several days before the qualifying race on March 15, with the first of four races to be held on the same day.

PEÑA: Keen to race

"I have been playing the latest F1 game for the past two weeks on my computer and I have been doing a lot of laps around Albert Park. At the moment that is the closest I could get (to the real thing)," said Peña, 19.

The support races, part of the Asian F3 Pacific Series and a non-championship of the Australian F3 Series, also features several AF3 veterans.

Among the drivers are last year's champion, James Winslow of Britain, promotions class winner Moreno Soeprapto of Indonesia, Paul Ip and AF3 Pacific Series leader Henri Karjalainen who will all drive for Team Goddard. Also in the field is Dillon Battistini of England.

SPORTS

Red-hot Mavericks shame Phil, Lakers

NEW YORK—THE RED-HOT DALlas Mavericks routed the Los Angeles Lakers, 108-72, to notch up their 17th consecutive victory on Sunday.

Josh Howard scored 24 points as the Mavericks handed the injury-plagued Lakers their worst home loss since the team moved to Los Angeles in 1960.

Dallas, which has won 52 of its 61 games this season, held the Lakers to 11 points in the deciding second quarter as the Mavericks avenged a January loss that snapped a 13-game winning streak.

Los Angeles, despite 25 points from Kobe Bryant, has now lost six in a row.

Lakers coach Phil Jackson said he was upset with the performance of his team.

"That was an embarrassing loss for us," Jackson told reporters. "There's no excuse for the way we played.

Dirk Nowitzki added 19 points for Dallas and four other players scored in double figures for the Mavericks, whose win streak is the longest in franchise history.

NBA on TV Today
10 a.m.—Houston vs Phoenix
(replays at 4 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.)

The streak ties the Mavericks for the seventh-longest in NBA history. The Phoenix Suns also won 17 in a row this season.

Johnson, the Dallas coach, downplayed the significance of the streak.

"You know, we really don't look at it like that," Johnson said. "It's just one game—we just won one game—and fortunately, we've been able to string together a couple of wins, but we know that some of those wins could have gone either way. That's why we don't really think too much about ourselves in that area."

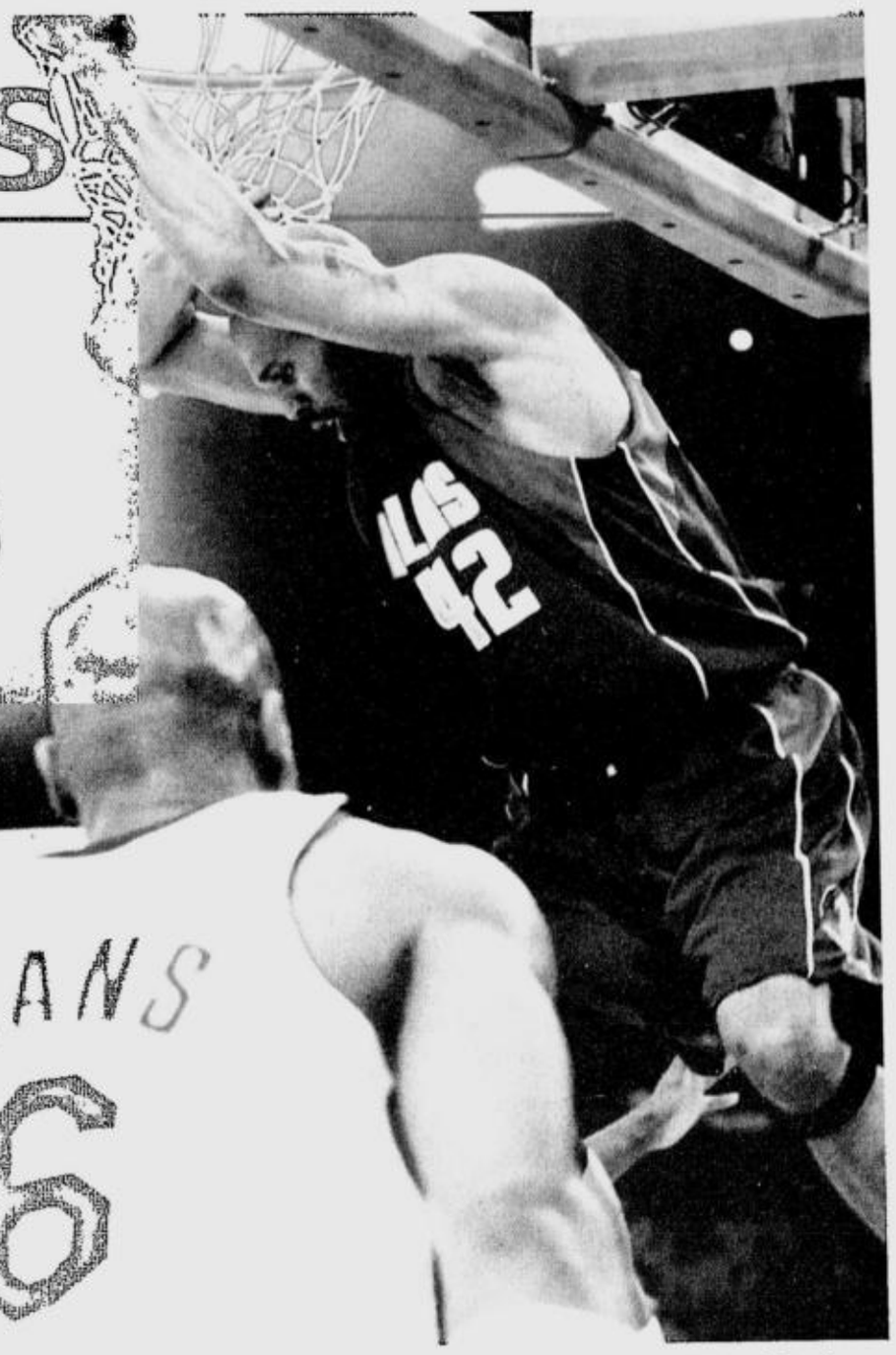
Yao impressive

Yao Ming scored 37 points, collected seven rebounds and blocked four shots to power the Houston Rockets to a 103-92 home win over the Orlando Magic. The game was Yao's fourth back and most impressive since missing 32 games with a broken right leg. Grant Hill led Orlando with 17 points.

Udonis Haslem scored just before the buzzer as the Miami Heat won their sixth straight game with a 106-104 home victory over the Washington Wizards. Eddie Jones had 18 points and Gary Payton 17 for the Heat, who have won 12 straight at home.

Allen Iverson had 24 points, seven assists, six rebounds and four steals as the Denver Nuggets ended a 20-game losing streak in Sacramento with a 113-101 win over the Kings. Carmelo Anthony added 29 points for the Nuggets. Ron Artest, who was arrested on suspicion of domestic violence last week, returned from suspension and had 17 points, eight rebounds, four steals and three assists.

LeBron James contributed 26 points, seven rebounds and six assists as the Cleveland Cavaliers won their fifth straight, 99-88, over the Indiana Pacers. *Reuters*



DALLAS Mavericks' Jerry Stackhouse hangs on to the rim after a slam dunk as the LA Lakers' Maurice Evans looks helplessly by during their NBA game in Los Angeles, Sunday. The Mavs won, 108-72. REUTERS

Lucky-loser Canas stops Federer win streak at 41

GUILLERMO CANAS: I dreamed about this AFP

INDIAN WELLS, CALIFORNIA—Three time defending champion Roger Federer was poised to make history at the Pacific Life Open Master Series, but somebody forgot to tell Guillermo Canas.

Argentina's Canas ended Federer's bid to break the all-time consecutive match winning streak, upsetting the Swiss superstar 7-5, 6-2 in the second round of the $5.3 million hardcourt tournament on Sunday.

"I dreamed about this but I didn't expect it," said Canas, who got into the draw as a lucky loser. "It is my first Masters Series tournament since I started again and to win against the No. 1 in the world and to play like this is great for me."

Federer, 25, had won 41 straight ATP Tour matches, and six more would have set an ATP record of 47 consecutive wins, breaking another Argentine Guillermo Vilas' record of 46, set 30 years ago.

ROGER FEDERER: He played the perfect match REUTERS

"He just kept the ball in play and moving me around," Federer said of Canas. "He put me away when he had to. He played the perfect match. The right guy won today."

Federer, who had a first-round bye, called for the trainer twice in Sunday's match—once at the end of first set and at 2-3 in the second set for a slight foot and tape problem.

Federer said he had some blisters on his toes but he wasn't making excuses.

The 29-year-old Canas is the first lucky loser to beat a world number one since Sandon Stolle stopped Thomas Muster in the first round of an ATP Dubai tournament 11 years ago.

Canas just returned to competition in September after a 15-month drug suspension that stripped him of his dignity and left him in financial ruin.

Canas' comeback continues into the third round at Indian Wells where he will face former 1998 French Open champ Carlos Moya of Spain.

Also through to the next round was British No. 1 Andy Murray, 2002 Wimbledon runner-up David Nalbandian and fifth seed Fernando Gonzalez.

Former world number ones Lleyton Hewitt, of Australia, and Russia's Marat Safin were eliminated in the second round. *AFP*

Sharapova, Hingis gain third round

INDIAN WELLS, CALIFORNIA—TOP SEED Maria Sharapova overcame sloppy serving and brutal heat to beat Frenchwoman Nathalie Dechy 7-5, 6-2, and reach the Pacific Life Open third round on Sunday.

Third seed Martina Hingis also advanced with a 6-2, 6-4 victory over Austria's Yvonne Meusburger.

SHARAPOVA AP

Sharapova, who has struggled with a hamstring injury and illness, had trouble controlling her groundstrokes in the first set but improved in the second.

The Russian has hardly played since losing to Serena Williams in the Australian Open final in January.

"When you don't compete for that amount of time, it's normal," she said.

Sharapova next faces compatriot and number 15 seed Vera Zvonareva who defeated Victoria Azarenka 6-3, 6-3.

HINGIS AP

Former world number one Hingis was delighted with her form as she won the first 16 points of the match, playing as well as she has at any time since coming out of retirement 15 months ago.

"The first four games it was unbelievable," she said.

"That's what I've been practicing for and it almost scared me." Hingis will next face number 14 Daniela Hantuchova, who fought past Francesca Schiavone of Italy 6-2, 7-6.

Hantuchova upset Hingis to win her only career title at Indian Wells five years ago.

Seventh seed Jelena Jankovic of Serbia beat Martina Muller 6-2, 6-4, and eighth seed Anna Chakvetadze of Russia overcame compatriot Maria Kirilenko 6-4, 6-1.

Number 11 Shahar Peer of Israel overcame a determined challenge from 19th seed Lucie Safarova of the Czech Republic to win 6-3, 1-6, 6-4, and number 12 Li Na of China defeated Alona Bondarenko of Russia 5-7, 6-3, 6-2. *Reuters*

Liang donates Singapore prize to raise China golf

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA—China's Liang Wenchong, who won the Singapore Masters for his first major title, will donate his $183,330 (euro143,226) winner's check to help develop golf in his country, the Asian Tour said Monday.

On Sunday Liang became only the second Chinese player to triumph in the co-sanctioned Asian Tour and European Tour tournament at the Clariden Leu Singapore Masters, following in the footsteps of his mentor Zhang Lian-wei, who won the same event in 2003.

A statement by the Asian Tour quoted Liang as saying that he will donate all his winnings to be "used as a startup fund for the development of the sport in China." Liang also donated his winnings from a domestic Tour victory last year for the same purpose.

"I hope the winnings from this time, as it is much more, will encourage our society to give us more support. I hope more youngsters will pick up the sport," Liang, 28, said.

The statement did not say who specifically will get the money.

After the Singapore victory, Liang's season's winnings swelled to $273,747 (euro213,865) and was second behind UBS Order of Merit leader, Anton Haig of South Africa, who has accumulated $426,035 (euro332,839).

No Chinese player has won the prestigious UBS Order of Merit crown but Liang's victory has raised hopes that the feat is within reach.

"It is a good start to be in a strong position on the UBS Order of Merit and hopefully I can remain in a good position as the season continues," Liang, who registered 18 top 10s prior to his long-awaited maiden Asian Tour victory, was quoted as saying.

STARTUP FUND: Liang Wenchong AP

The Asian Tour statement said Liang's generosity stems from the fact that he benefited greatly when he was hand-picked in school to play golf as a 15-year-old.

He honed his game at the Zhongshan Hot Spring Golf Club, China's first modern-day golf course built in the mid-1980s, and developed into a fine amateur, winning China's Amateur Open for three straight years. He finished fourth in the Volvo China Open in 1999.

"I never knew what golf was about until I was picked to learn the game. Zhongshan is like my mother, they looked after me and helped me. They paid for me to play in tournaments and it was through them that I am who I am today," Liang said. "And just like how the club has helped my career, I want to do the same for the development of golf in China."

The Asian Tour moves to China for the first time this season for the $1 million (euro781,250) TCL Classic at Yalong Bay Golf Club in Sanya, Hainan island this week. *AP*

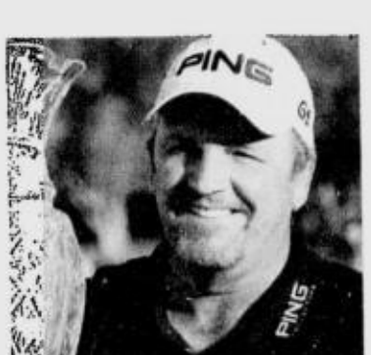
Calcavecchia cops 13th title

MIAMI—MARK CALCAVECCHIA, boosted by three birdies in four holes after the turn, held his nerve to clinch his 13th PGA Tour title by one shot at the Tampa Bay Championship in Palm Harbor on Sunday.

Tied for the overnight lead with fellow American Heath Slocum, Calcavecchia survived two bogeys on the last three holes to card a one-under-par 70 on the Copperhead Course.

The 46-year-old, whose only major victory came at the 1989 British Open, birdied the 11th, 13th and 14th to tighten his grip before his untidy finish left him on 10-under 274.

Slocum, who recovered from an early double-bogey with four birdies in five holes from the 10th, missed a four-foot par putt at the last to force a playoff, a closing 71 earning a tie for second place with Australia's John Senden (66). *Reuters*



CALCAVECCHIA AP

Lin leads Chinese romp

BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND—TOP seed Lin Dan of China blazed to his third All England singles title in four years on Sunday with a 21-13, 21-12 victory over sixth-seeded compatriot Chen Yu. The victory was the first of the day for the Chinese who were hoping to win all five titles up for grabs for the first time in the history of the tournament which dates back to 1899 but eventually they had to settle for four. The bid failed at the second hurdle in the men's doubles when top seeds Cai Yun and Fu Haifeng lost 21-15, 21-18 to the exciting new Malaysian pair of Koo Kien Keat and Tan Boon Heong, the Asian Games champions. The women's doubles went to third seeds Wei Yili and Zhang Yawen who beat second-seeded fellow Chinese Yang Wei and Zhang Jiewen 21-16, 8-21, 24-22.

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Ayala, FBDC in P8-B Fort Boni project

Old Metro Pacific master plan junked

By Daxim L. Lucas

AS MUCH AS P8 BILLION WILL BE SPENT ON Bonifacio Global City over the next five years as part of its owners plan to accelerate the development of the former military camp amid a property boom.

The ambitious scheme marks a radical departure in form and substance by the Ayala-controlled firm from the plan originally laid down by Metro Pacific Corp. that stalled under the weight of the 1997 East Asian financial crisis.

In a press briefing, a ranking official of Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. (FBDC) said the ultimate aim was to make the 240-hectare property a complementary extension of the Makati central business district.

"We have spent almost P2 billion for the project," FBDC head of commercial operations Aniceto Bisnar Jr. said. "We will invest an-

AYALA/ B3

PAL PHOTO EXHIBIT. Philippine Airlines president Jaime J. Bautista squats to examine a rare photo, one of several on exhibit at the SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City, showcasing the rich legacy of the nation's flag carrier. The exhibit of 100 historical photos , dubbed "PAL at 66: Beyond a Proud Legacy" depicts the trailblazing role of PAL in commercial aviation, not just in the Philippines but in the region as well, being Asia's first airline. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Gov't debt fell sharply to 64% of GDP in 2006

HIGHER REVENUES HELPED TRIM the government debt to 64 percent of gross domestic product at the end of last year, compared to 72 percent of GDP in 2005, the Bureau of the Treasury said yesterday.

In monetary terms, the national government debt fell 0.9 percent over the period to P3.85 trillion, of which P1.7 trillion is owed to foreign creditors and P2.15 trillion to domestic creditors, it said in a statement.

The government is aiming to pare the debt further to 56 percent of GDP by 2008.

"This is the result of the (government's) debt consolidation program," National Treasurer Omar Cruz said.

Domestic debt fell 0.5 percent while the foreign debt dropped 1.5 percent as the government repaid some obligations to take advantage of the rise in the peso against the dollar.

The domestic debt decreased by P10.21 billion from the 2005 level due to net redemption incurred by the national government, while the decrease in the foreign debt of P26.51 billion was due to the P13 billion in net repayments and P13 billion in net appreciation of the peso.

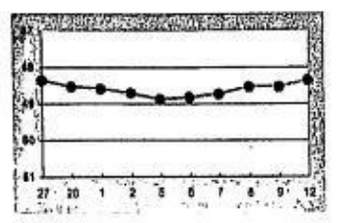
The debt total excludes "contingent debt" or obligations of state-run corporations which are backed by guarantees issued by the government.

Total contingent debt dropped 2.79 percent to P569.93 billion, the

GOV'T/ B3

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



FEBRUARY MARCH

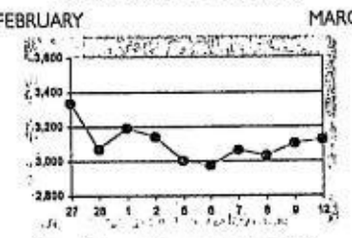
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱48.36 = $1

As of 5 p.m., March 12, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



FEBRUARY MARCH

(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares close higher

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.81 percent higher yesterday as investors snapped up select stocks amid signs of stability in overseas markets, dealers said.

SHARES/ B4

Peso rebounds as Asia markets return to normal

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY REBOUNDED TO 48.36 from Friday's 48.545 to the US dollar as Asian financial markets marked gains on the back of an upbeat US jobs data and an apparent return of investors' appetite on equities.

At the Philippine Dealing System, the local currency yesterday closed at the day's high. Earlier, it fell to as low as 48.49 before gaining 18.5 centavos at the day's end. Value turnover at the spot foreign exchange market amounted to $378 million.

Jonathan Ravelas, chief strategist at Banco de Oro Universal Bank, said yesterday's close would support the peso's further appreciation towards the 48.25-48.35 range against the greenback.

"With financial markets normalizing, foreign investors are slowly moving back to the equity markets which helped the currency to appreciate," Ravelas said.

The main-share Philippine Stock Exchange composite index also firmed up yesterday, gaining 25.14 to close at 3,124.96.

Trading across major Asian currency markets was bullish after it was reported that the US economy created 97,000 new jobs in February, reducing the unemployment rate.

The report eased concerns on the US economy, believed by some to be running the risk of a recession. It also encouraged investors to be more aggressive on emerging markets.

This was taken by offshore traders as a sign that the sell-down of emerging market assets might be fizzling out. On the other hand, the yen succumbed to some profit-taking.

Meanwhile, other currency traders said the peso was also supported by a comment by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. that the negative interest rate environment—where interest rates are lower than the inflation rate—was unsustainable.

He said there would a gradual bottoming out of interest rates as these cheap levels would create demand for borrowings. He added that it's not good for the economy if negative interest rates would persist as this would discourage savings.

Government urged to strengthen infrastructure screening process

THE GLOBAL DONOR COMMUNITY HAS urged the Philippine government not to abolish the infrastructure screening process of the inter-agency Investment Coordination Committee.

During the Philippine Development Forum with multilateral and bilateral donors held in Cebu City last week, the consensus among participants was that the process should be "maintained and strengthened," according to World Bank country director and forum co-chair Joachim von Amsberg.

He said the ICC process, in which investment projects are reviewed at the ministerial level, would ensure proper prioritization by the government.

"(The forum) participants emphasized the importance of the ICC process to coordinate priorities and review soundness of public investment plans and their potential fiscal implications," Von Amsberg said.

The Cabinet, upon the suggestion of President Macapagal-Arroyo, earlier approved a policy to bypass the ICC in order to address perceived delays in evaluating priority infrastructure projects.

With the new policy in place, proponents can now bypass the ICC and go straight to the operating agencies to lobby for their projects—something the World Bank views with concern.

Although the participants want to improve the process, to make it more agile, the infrastructure screening process shouldn't be done away with, Von Amsberg said.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, who chairs the ICC, said that there was a need to cut short the ICC's evaluation process.

"We'll expedite the process, even the project preparation," he said.

At the close of the forum on Friday, the Philippines was called upon to shore up its poor investment rate from 15 percent to at least 20 percent of gross domestic product in order to speed up growth and significantly reduce poverty in the country.

Doris C. Dumlao

Terminal cancel

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

THE MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRport Authority (MIAA) knew exactly what month the long-delayed airport terminal Naia 3 would finally open, and it was to be in March.

Only, nobody knew exactly what year!

Reports said that our airport authority just canceled—again—another "opening" of the terminal this month, although it should have been opened almost 10 years ago.

For MIAA chief Alfonso Cusi to do that, despite the two-year order from Malacañang to open it ASAP, something must be terribly wrong with the building.

The "safety" of the public (oops, that apparently means "you") seems to be the problem. Two engineering firms said that the facility exposes the users to life safety risk.

Meaning, well, you can actually die inside the Naia 3! Imagine that!

One of the firms is the world famous structural engineering group Over Arup (designer of the Sydney Opera House), hired by the US law firm White and Case.

The law firm represents us in the court case in the United States, filed by the famous Piatco and its German partner Fraport, demanding $500 to $600 million for the terminal. Naturally, the lawyers wanted to know if the terminal was really worth that much.

Now we, the taxpayers, know the answer—thanks to those engineering reports.

To think, based on the original plan of the company of "taipans" called AEDC, the terminal should have already been operational way back in 1998.

But then our government handed over the project to Piatco which, for years, has been rumored to cut corners. Last year the ceiling in Naia 3 collapsed, didn't it? Do you still wonder why MIAA faces "safety" issues today?

Yet our officials were quick to blame the Japanese contractor Takenaka for the structural defects, conveniently saving Piatco from the multibillion-peso fiasco.

Even the NBI, the DOJ, the Ombudsman and the Sandiganbayan mysteriously dismissed case after case against Piatco.

And what does Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita have to say about the terminal's structural cancer? He says that Malacañang is "disappointed."

That's all, boss—disappointed? This is the man who insisted that the government should immediately pay Piatco the P3-billion "down" for this lemon!

Of course, Ermita had back-up voices in Rep. Prospero Nograles and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, who both made a lot of noise about the payment.

What now, gentlemen? Do we, the taxpayers, get our money back?

* * *

So far, according to my source at the Department of Budget and Management, the government already released some P23 billion for infrastructure projects in the 2007 budget.

Look at that—P23 billion! It's a lot of money, which actually came from us, thanks to the busy BIR which, in turn, is targeting an even higher tax collection this year, making life not that easy for those in business.

That's why the senatorial candidates of this cute administration seem to be unfazed by the "survey results" showing that they are taking a beating. That P23 billion will go a long way in propaganda value. Right, Toting?

All right, the P23-billion infrastructure spending will be good for the economy. Why? Well, we need infrastructure, and we get a lot of projects only during elections.

Based on the plans of the Department of Agriculture, moreover, a good part of that P23 billion should go to irrigation and post harvest facilities.

Tell you what, the so-called "food highway"—which is a plan to build more roads and such in farm areas like the Cagayan Valley and Mindanao—is becoming a by-word in this cute administration.

The program should bring down the prices of food in urban areas. You know, something we needed to do ages ago!

You see, part of the "food highway" is the plan to complete—this year, which is an election year—some 17 ports under constructions or renovation, and to start 10 new railway projects.

Between us girls, the program includes the MRT-Edsa extension connecting North Ave. (Quezon City) and Monumento (Caloocan City). Whew! About time too!

And for the sake of big-time real estate speculators, the ports include the Dingalan Port (Aurora Province), the Batangas Port, Cawit Port (Marinduque), Cawayan Port (Masbate), Pantao Port (Albay), Siquijor Port, Jagna Port (Bohol), Ubay Port (Bohol), Liloan Ferry Terminal (Southern Leyte), Limasawa Port (Southern Leyte), Naval Port (Biliran), Guisiliban Port (Camiguin), Cagayan de Oro Port, Davao (Sasa) Port, Balbagon Port, (Camiguin), Subic Bay Port, and the Lucena Port Passenger Terminal.

* * *

The PR firm Stratworks just got five Anvils, the most number of awards given to an agency this year by the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP)

They included the "Grand Anvil" award for its campaign "Kaya ng Pinoy," involving the expedition of the first Filipinos to reach the summit of Mt. Everest.

Well, even the SWS survey cited the feat as the most positive news in 2006, actually a year of natural calamities and disasters.

The SWS concluded, despite those calamities, that the survey showed no shortage of national pride among Filipinos. Some 84 percent of respondents said "they are proud to be Filipinos."

I just thought that Stratworks probably deserved the award.

Now, if only more firms can do campaigns for, say, values....

Also, if only Manny "the people's champion" Paquiao can quit being cute, too, and start concentrating on his sport again.

FUJITSU

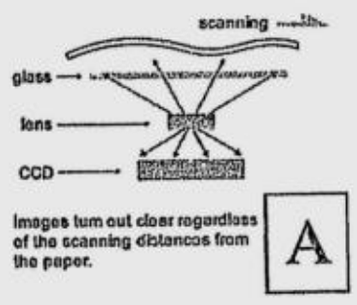
THE POSSIBILITIES ARE INFINITE

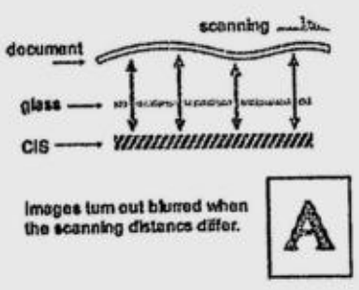
Scanner Shopping Tips

When it's time for you to invest in a document scanner, it pays to "look under the hood" to ensure that you get the best overall value for your money. Here are the key features that contribute to excellent image quality, speed, ease of use, and long scanner life.

Use of CCD Technology

Advanced CCD technology enables a scanner to create sharp images from documents that are uneven, bent or creased. A high-quality CCD imaging sensor also delivers vibrant color reproduction.



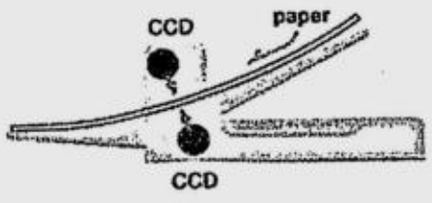


Straight Paper Path

Eliminate paper jams and crumpled or torn documents with a scanner that allows the paper to travel in a straight line. A straight paper path allows the scanner to handle more types of documents, from thin tracing paper to thick cardboard. A U-shaped paper path is a no-no!

Simultaneous Duplex Scanning

Save time and enhance efficiency with a scanner that captures both sides of a document in a single pass. This also simplifies the way the documents are handled and reduces the possibility of getting the pages arranged in the wrong order.



Automatic Document Feeder

An Automatic Document Feeder (ADF) will save you from countless hours of tediously hand-feeding documents into the scanner and allows you to scan large volumes of documents at high speed for increased productivity.

Simple Maintenance and Durability

Make sure that the scanner you buy is very durable and easy to maintain, with consumable parts that can be easily replaced by the users themselves.

Speed, Capacity and Extras

Scanners are offered in a variety of models with different scanning speeds, paper handling capacities, connection interfaces and software utilities. Balance cost and capability by choosing the model that best fits your requirement.

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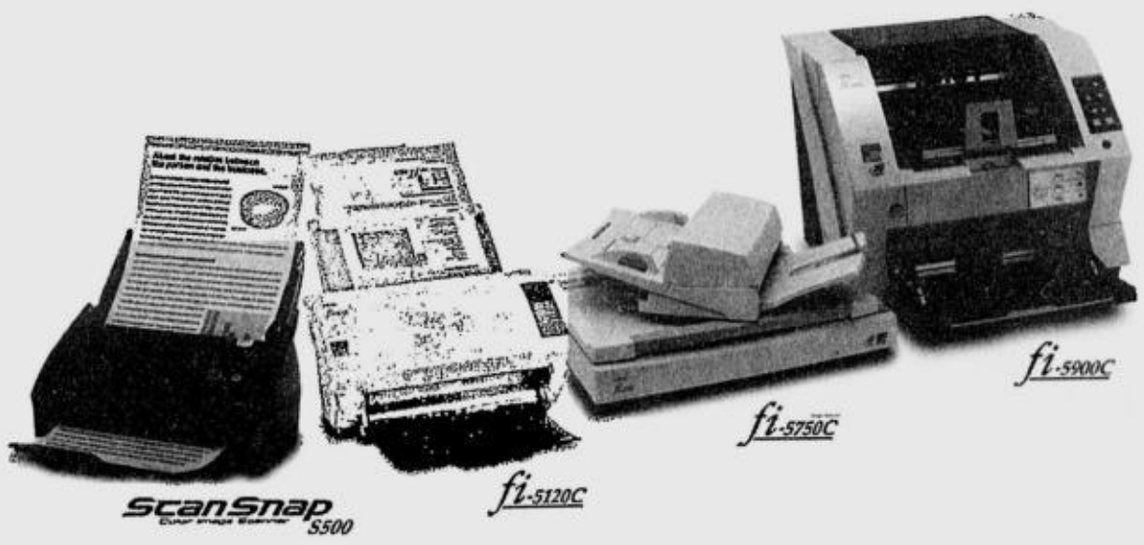

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Asia-Pacific air travel seen expanding by 7% this year

By Riza T. Olchondra

RP in step with growth trend

GLOBAL INDUSTRY GROUP IATA (International Air Transport Association) has projected that Asia-Pacific air travel would increase by 6.6 percent this year.

The Philippines can keep up or even beat the regional average because of tourism drives, relatively stable oil prices, and the overflow crowd from China, an official of the Civil Aeronautics Board said.

According to Iata's latest report on passenger traffic, regional demand increased 5 percent from the same month last year. Worldwide growth was placed at 6.1 percent, signaling a positive start for 2007.

"January passenger numbers tell a good story. People want to fly and airlines continue to meet this demand with even greater efficiency—filling 74.9 percent of seats available globally. But it is no time to relax," Iata director general and CEO Giovanni Bisignani said in a statement.

"(The Philippines) will not deviate from Iata's estimate," CAB deputy executive director Porvenir P. Porciuncula said in an interview.

Porciuncula said air travel in the Philippines consistently grew throughout last year.

This indicated that the industry has recovered from the so-called 9/11 attacks on the United States in 2002 and the breakout of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome and bird flu in 2003, as well as the perennial increases in oil prices, he said.

"Hopefully, oil prices will remain stable and terror threats and (health) outbreaks will be contained so that prospects for air travel remain good," he said.

Porciuncula also cited an expected surge in visits to China, the site of the 2008 summer Olympics, as a magnet for incoming tourists.

"The Philippines would benefit from the tourism overflow (from China), especially toward the end of the year," he said.

He also said improving the safety and security image of the country while also developing inland transport would go a long way in drawing more tourists to visit.

Ayala, FBDC ... From page B1

other P1.8 billion this year."

Ayala Land Inc. and Evergreen Holdings of the Campos group acquired a controlling majority of Bonifacio Land Corp. from Metro Pacific in 2003 and are now the partners of the government in FBDC.

Under the new development plan, more than a hundred buildings will rise in the area, some of which are in the planning stage or under construction.

"In the next five years, we will have a gross built-up floor area of 1.7 million square meters," Bisnar said.

This will include 159,000 square meters of office space, a million square meters of residential space, 305,000 square meters of commercial and retail space, and 212,000 square meters for institutional locators like schools and hospitals.

To date, the project has gotten off to a flying start with FBDC's investment of about P1 billion to develop the commercial and retail center of the project dubbed Bonifacio High Street.

The development is a commercial stretch of almost a kilometer from the Serendra residential development to Third Avenue on the west side of the property.

All told, Bonifacio High Street will have a land area of 36 hectares and is as wide as Ayala Ave. on the average.

It offers a gross leasable area of 20,000 sq. m. and will eventually have about 150 retails shops and restaurants aimed at attracting more human traffic into the area.

FBDC said Bonifacio High Street would also be home to office spaces, 90 percent of which are already leased out.

During the briefing, Ayala officials also unveiled a new master plan for Bonifacio Global City, junking the old Metro Pacific plan of concentric streets in favor of a three-by-three city block scheme.

Bisnar said the old Metro Pacific plan presented a "big problem for traffic congestion" based on studies made by urban planners. At the same time, the old plan also entailed the creation of irregularly sized lots that would have been difficult to sell or use.

Bisnar added that locators would also benefit from the expected drop in water utility rates with the integration of the local water system with the network of Manila Water Co., which is also Ayala-owned.

"Before, [water] used to cost five times as much as Manila Water's rates," Bisnar said. "We have brought it down to only twice the regular rate, and we expect it to reach parity over time."

Gov't debt fell ... From page B1

Treasury said.

The decline of P16.42 billion in foreign contingent liabilities resulted from net repayments and the appreciation of the peso against the dollar. On the other hand, the increase in domestic contingent liabilities was brought by the net issuance of guarantees by the national government. *AFP*

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AUB to list shares on PSE in '07

By Doris C. Dumlao

ASIA UNITED BANK HAS FINALIZED PLANS to join this year the ranks of companies listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange.

AUB president Abraham Co said in an interview Friday night that the bank's board of directors had recently approved the plan to sell about P600 million worth of shares to the public through an initial public offering.

The proposed offer, he said, was equivalent to 10 percent of the total company shares, which is the minimum required by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas for regular commercial banks to get universal bank status.

A universal banking license allows banks to engage in activities such as investment banking and investing in property ventures.

"We want to be listed because later on we might want to expand," Co said, "we're in the process of getting all the paperwork done."

The major shareholders of Asia United Bank are Republic Biscuit Corporation (44 percent), Lambda Holdings (20 percent), Taiwanese principals China United Trust and Investment Corporation (20 percent) and China Development Industrial Bank (5 percent).

Other Philippine banks already listed on the PSE—like Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. and Union Bank of the Philippines—are selling new shares to take advantage of the strong investor appetite for Asian equities.

AUB has a capital base of P5.5 billion, equivalent to a capital adequacy ratio of about 26 percent, more than double the required 10 percent.

Its capital is also enough for AUB to meet the more stringent capital adequacy requirements under Basel 2.

AUB was expected to have yielded about P850 million in net profit last year, up from about P700 million in 2005.

Commercial bank plans to sell P600M worth of shares

Job creation in the US slowing down

AN ELDERLY COUPLE WENT TO visit their doctor. "How is your sex life?" said the doctor jokingly. "It's okay," said the old man, "but the first time I do it, I get hot and sweaty and the second time, I get cold and chilly."

The doctor was puzzled by this remark and asked the wife for an explanation. "Oh, that is because the first time he does it is in December and the second time is in July."

A woman was driving down the C5 at 70kph while knitting. A policeman on a motorcycle saw her and said, "Pull over." "No," she replied. "It's a scarf."

A painter used to get lots of jobs painting churches because his quotation was always the lowest. But unknown to his clients, he used to thin the paint with turpentine to lower the cost.

One day, he finished painting a church when, out of a cloudless sky, came black clouds, flashes of lightning and a deluge of rain, which washed away all the paint.

The man fell to his knees and said, "Lord, forgive me." And out of the clouds, a voice boomed, "Repaint, repaint and thin no more."

I took my wife to a health restaurant, which is virtually vegetarian. I ordered a thick steak medium rare. The shocked waiter said, "What about the mad cow?" "Oh," I said, "she can order for herself."

* * *

After the global meltdown a week ago, all markets recovered including Shanghai and Shenzhen, but the Philippines was the last to participate because foreign brokers were still selling down our stocks.

However, eventually all markets improved and on March 7, the Nasdaq surged 157 points and the Nasdaq 44 points. Every market participated and the Phisix surged 125 points led by TEL, up P105.

Unfortunately, the rise in the DOW turned out to be a dead cat bounce, an American term for a one-day rally.

Greenspan's remarks that there was a one-in-three chance of a recession did not help. He is entitled to express his opinion but whether he should is another matter.

Bernanke was unperturbed and assured Congress that the economy was slowing but not going into recession. On Friday night, the economy created only 97,000 jobs, the smallest since 2005 and well below the revised figure of 146,000 in January. However, hourly wages rose 0.4 percent to $17.16, an increase of 4.1 percent from a year earlier and twice Bernanke's inflation target.

This remains a concern for the FED and no cut in interest rates is expected soon.

On Friday morning, the market was thrilled by our exports rising 27.3 percent, against an expected 10 percent, and the Phisix jumped another 71 points. But this will not be repeated next month because in December, inventories were deliberately run down due to the strength of the peso.

So next month, exports should return to a more normal pattern.

The results announced by TEL were in line with expectations, but at least one foreign broker downgraded the stock from a BUY to a HOLD and lowered the one-year target from P3000 to P2500.

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

The company declared a final dividend of P50 so there is already a yield, which will increase next year even if earnings remain static. PLTL looks to have done better, adding two million subscribers to a total of five million at the end of 2006.

This year, the company will be debt-free and cash rich, so by end 2007 or early 2008, it should be able to pay out a substantial dividend, possibly 60 centavos.

It looks as if the time has time to sell UITFS. Governor Tetangco of the central bank said that bonds would have a correction because yields were too low. "Negative interest rates are something that cannot be sustained." This refers to peso bonds, not dollar-denominated bonds.

Geo fell sharply on news of a two for seven rights issue designed to raise P500 million with which to buy new tenements. The fall from P2 to P1.30 is too severe.

Holders who cannot, or do not want to avail themselves of the rights issue, should first subscribe and then sell them at a profit. Do not let the rights issue lapse.

I have been intrigued by the massive turnover in Omico and believe that I mentioned it in the INQUIRER a few weeks ago. There is no smoke without fire so I decided to investigate it.

Omico has been talking to claim owners for a possible joint venture or acquisition. At the same time, it has been approached by a number of foreign investors for a possible tie up.

The company is studying various proposals but is very diligent, discreet and choosy in selecting mining claims and investments partners. So it tends to move slowly and surely to ensure a higher rate of success.

The company has preserved its property assets very well. There are two joint ventures, Urdaneta with Sta. Lucia and Tagaytay with Robinson Homes, and there is a low cost housing project in Sta. Rosa, Nueva Ecija that is developed by Omico.

Its Baguio and Makati projects are in the planning stage and all properties are in prime locations.

Technically, the chart looks very good. While almost every other stock has been adversely affected by the China meltdown, OM was hardly affected and has been rising steadily in huge volume.

Support seems to be widely spread. My only comment is that the company's capital base is too small to attract foreign investors and it would be in the company's long-term interest to increase it. This is essentially a good long-term investment.

I asked a Saudi prince why oil prices had fallen $2 a barrel. He replied, "We are trying to sheikh out the weak holders." *mrbearbull@hotmail.com.*

Otto to sell shares to fund RP activities

By Ronnel W. Domingo

AUSTRALIAN PETROLEUM FIRM Otto Energy Ltd. said it was raising $2.6 million to fund exploration activities in the Philippines, including those in the Calauit field north off Palawan where the firm expects to produce oil by early 2008.

In a statement, the Australian Stock Exchange-listed firm said it would sell 16.3 million shares at $0.16 a share to raise $2.6 million.

Otto Energy said it would sell the shares to two Swiss-managed oil and gas investment funds.

"The funds have strong banking links in Europe that will be of value to Otto in the future, the relationship also brings supportive links to our activities in the Philippines," the firm said.

"Their confidence in Otto to progress to the status of oil and gas producer within the next 12 months supports the board's expectations," it added.

Otto Energy said the proceeds of the placement would be used for capital expenditure and to accelerate its exploration program in the Philippines, Turkey and Argentina.

Formerly known as Ottoman Energy, the company has interest in three Service Contracts with the Philippine government, including a 70-percent stake in the offshore block in Caluit, which is under SC No. 50.

Through NorAsian Energy Ltd., which Otto Energy controls, the latter has a 70-percent stake in the Calauit field.

The field is estimated to have an oil reserve of 39.5 million barrels and recoverable reserves of 6.4 million barrels.

According to the Department of Energy, Otto Energy had said it planned to put the Calauit field into production at a rate of 12,000 to 15,000 barrels of oil a day.

Also through NorAsian, Otto Energy has a 50-percent stake in two blocks—Cebu and Leyte—under SC No. 51; and 55 percent in the Palawan Ultra Deep Water blocks under SC No. 55.

Otto Energy said available data show that the SC 55 UDW blocks were about five times the size of the Malampaya field.

Chinese truck maker ...

From page B6

built units (CBUs) worldwide in a span of seven years and is considered a blue-chip firm in Shanghai.

Tuazon said the plan was for Mitsui Trading to build up the JAC brand as provider of high-quality yet inexpensive automotive products that are accessible to the local market.

According to JAC's website, the firm has "consistently retained its rank as China's top exporter of light trucks while its JAC Bus Chassis continues to be the number one brand in China for 12 consecutive years."

In its bid to become a global automobile manufacturer, JAC has established a presence in Europe, Russia, Latin America, Southeast Asia, South America, Africa and the Middle East.

Mitsui Trading is the latest addition to JAC's list of distributors in at least 30 countries, through which the firm sells on its formula of "Japanese technology combined with American standards at China prices."

Mitsui Trading was established in 1996 as an importer, distributor and dealer of vehicles, parts and accessories.

CURRENCIES

March 12, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.762544	1.000000	48.5100
Japan	Yen	0.006449	0.008457	0.4102
United Kingdom	Pound	1.473082	1.931800	93.7116
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.097590	0.127980	6.2083
Switzerland	Franc	0.617594	0.809913	39.2889
Canada	Dollar	0.650634	0.853242	41.3908
Singapore	Dollar	0.499701	0.655308	31.7890
Australia	Dollar	0.594716	0.779910	37.8334
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.022770	2.652661	128.6806
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.203426	0.266773	12.9412
Brunei	Dollar	0.498069	0.653168	31.6852
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000083	0.000109	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.023319	0.030581	1.4835
UAE	Dirham	0.207681	0.272353	13.2118
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.311400	63.6160
Korea	Won	0.000807	0.001058	0.0513
China	Yuan**	0.098463	0.129124	6.2638
ArgentinaPeso	0.245784	0.322321	15.6358	
Brazil	Real	0.363636	0.476872	23.1331
Denmark	Kroner	0.134248	0.176053	8.5403
India	Rupee	0.017303	0.022691	1.1007
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217745	0.285551	13.8521
Mexico	New Peso	0.068547	0.089892	4.3607
New Zealand	Dollar	0.526546	0.690512	33.4967
South Africa	Rand	0.104036	0.136433	6.6184
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023139	0.030344	1.4720

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—March 9, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of March 9, 2007

Shares close higher

From page B1

However, the thin turnover indicated many were still wary following recent volatility, they added.

The composite index was up 25.14 points at 3,124.96 after trading between 3,099.82 and 3,126.38 and Gains led losers 61 to 25 losers, with 59 stocks unchanged.

Turnover was 4.03 billion shares worth P3.34 billion.

"Investors are slowly going back to the market after the key 3,000 level was (cleared) last week," said Rommel Macapagal of Westlink Global Equities.

The main index plunged below the 3,000 support level last Monday but clawed back some of its losses later in the week as the market caught up with the recovery in regional bourses.

"We're now looking for a stronger base above 3,100 points. Our positive macro-economic fundamentals should help sustain the recovery," Macapagal said. *AFP*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 12, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	11	11	10.75	10.75	26,400
Banco De Oro Univ. Bank	58	58	57	58	633,700
Bank of the Phil. Islands	67	67	66	67	1,534,200
China Banking Corp.	860	860	860	860	600
Citystate Savings Bank	20	20	20	20	500
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.52	0.52	0.5	0.51	1,690,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	100	100	100	100	9,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	60	61	60	61	4,917,700
Philippine National Bank	48	48	48	48	1,500
Phil. Savings Bank	63	65	63	64.5	25,200
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	36.5	36.5	34	35.5	158,700
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	6.8	6.8	6	6.5	584,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	6	6	6	6	12,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5	20,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1600	1600	1600	1600	1,730
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.84	1.86	1.84	1.86	268,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	715	715	705	705	4,370
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2100	2115	2100	2115	860
Ivantage Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.5	1.52	496,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
Pnoc Energy Dev. Corp.	5.9	6	5.8	5.9	40,967,000
First Gen Corp.	51.5	52	51.5	52	575,500
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	72	73	71.5	71.5	1,124,300
Manila Electric Co. A	71	74	71	73.5	182,600
Manila Electric Co. B	71.5	74	71.5	73.5	1,721,700
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.1	9.1	9	9	1,710,000
Petron Corp.	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.35	6,498,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1,340,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.38	1.38	1.34	1.34	418,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	7,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	26	26	26	26	171,600
Jollibee Foods Corp.	50.5	50.5	49.5	50.5	596,300
Liberty Flour Mills Inc.	21	21	21	21	1,000
RFM Corp.	1.3	1.36	1.3	1.36	353,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.6	17,000
San Miguel Corp. A	62	62	62	62	106,600
San Miguel Corp. B	71	72	71	71.5	266,700
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	1.98	2.16	1.98	2.14	3,770,000
Universal Robina Corp.	18	18	17.75	18	2,218,800
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.56	1.68	1.56	1.68	30,545,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.6	2,204,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	198,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	6	6	5.9	6	179,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.6	5.8	5.6	5.8	337,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	608,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	20,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	10,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.35	25,420,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	40,500,000
Ayala Corp.	560	570	560	570	105,560
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	50,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8	8.2	8	8	1,839,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.9	6.2	5.4	6.1	4,950,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	200,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.1	3.15	3.1	3.15	104,000
APC Group Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.32	13,240,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	37,800,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.5	1.52	1.48	1.48	5,401,000
Pal Holdings Inc.	3.55	3.55	3.5	3.5	20,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	4.9	5.2	4.9	5.1	1,244,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.4	3.55	3.35	3.5	53,386,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.2	7.4	7.1	7.1	1,531,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5	5.1	5	5.1	211,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	30,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.46	2.46	34,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.75	12.75	12.75	12.75	582,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.51	0.55	0.51	0.55	300,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	7.1	7.3	6.8	7.3	1,628,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.52	1.54	1,434,000
Pacifica	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	2,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	830,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	699,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	12,940,000
SM Investments Corp.	355	355	350	350	170,200
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	50,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	16.25	16.25	16	16	10,843,000
Belle Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.34	1.34	2,259,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.18	1.22	1.18	1.22	474,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.52	0.53	0.49	0.51	13,710,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.9	3.9	3.75	3.75	26,000
C & P Homes Inc.	2.9	3.05	2.9	2.9	1,880,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.78	0.8	0.77	0.79	34,440,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	100,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.6	1.64	1.6	1.6	89,319,000
Interport Res.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.01	4,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	2,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.47	0.47	0.46	0.46	1,000,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82	600,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	1,900,000
Megaworld Corp.	3.05	3.1	3	3.1	75,354,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	13,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.65	0.7	0.64	0.67	4,020,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	6,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	20	20	19.5	19.75	5,385,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.61	0.61	0.59	0.6	6,450,000
SM Development Corp.	4	4	3.95	3.95	619,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.5	11.5	11.25	11.25	813,700
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.68	0.72	0.68	0.7	950,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.145	0.145	2,200,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23.75	23.75	23.5	23.5	7,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.68	1.7	1.66	1.7	6,552,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1340	1360	1340	1355	28,330
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.7	6.9	6.7	6.8	1,861,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2380	2380	2355	2360	220,800
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.245	0.26	32,090,000
Imperial Res.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	1,500,000
Ionics Inc.	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	99,000
IPVG Corp.	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.5	342,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	1,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0625	0.065	0.0625	0.065	20,100,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.68	1.76	1.68	1.76	786,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.06	2.06	2.02	2.06	223,000
Philweb Corp.	0.047	0.0525	0.047	0.049	788,400,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.25	4.25	4.2	4.2	5,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	28.5	30.5	28.5	30	2,756,500
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1.04	1.1	1.04	1.1	104,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	10	11	10	11	15,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.35	4,092,000
Philippine Racing Club	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	3,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	40,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.8	2.85	2.65	2.65	1,504,000
Paxys Inc.	25	28.5	25	26.5	1,164,600
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.2	5.3	5.2	5.2	165,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.2	5.4	5.2	5.4	39,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	90,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.7	9	8.7	8.9	443,000
Benguet Corp. A	11	11	11	11	6,500
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.5	31,000
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.38	1.4	1.26	1.3	131,135,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	14,960,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.34	0.36	0.34	0.34	21,430,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.028	308,900,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.033	76,300,000
Omico Corp.	0.022	0.022	0.02	0.02	1,748,500,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.15	4.15	4.05	4.15	2,087,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	19	19.25	19	19	90,900
Vulcan Ind'l	1.16	1.2	1.14	1.2	5,356,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.34	0.36	0.34	0.36	10,450,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	68,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	6,000,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	106,900,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.2	9.5	9.2	9.5	33,000
PREFERRED					
Ayala Corp. Pref. B	118	118	118	118	500
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	11	11	11	11	100
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	23.75	23.75	23.75	23.75	50,000
Metro Pac. Inv.- Warrants	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	38,000

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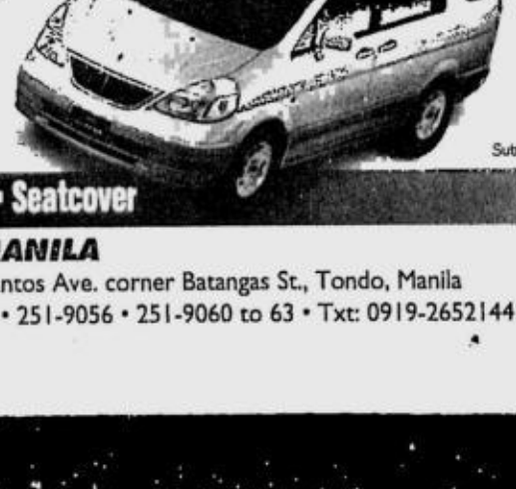

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Sale Closing: Tuesday, 27th March 2006 - 18:00 CCT (local time)
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Including:-
La Scolpitrice Carving Machines, James Taylor Clamping Machines, Bulleri Routers, Elettronica Cavallo High Frequency Generator, Bacci Mortiser & Tenoning Machines; etc.
Viewing: Saturday, 24th & Monday, 26th March 2007 - 9am to 5pm
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Live Auction Sale
WOODWORKING MACHINES; LIFTING EQUIPMENTS; ELECTRICAL; MISC.
Sale Date: Wednesday, 28th March 2007 at 10:30am
At: H. Cortes Street, Wireless, Mandaue City, Cebu
On View: Tuesday, 27 March 2007 from 9am to 5pm & morning of sale day
Refundable Deposit: Php20,000 (upon registration)
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Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE for PICC PROJECTS
RE-INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites interested general building contractors with current Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License to apply to apply for eligibility and to bid and if later found eligible, to bid for the project described below:

Project Title / Scope of Work	:	Proposed Design, Construction and One Year Operation of the PICC Sewage Treatment Plant Furnishing of all materials, labor, tools, equipment, technical supervision, laboratory testing and other services and performing all operations necessary for the proposed design, construction and one year operation of the PICC Sewage Treatment Plant all in accordance with the Terms of Reference and the approved plans and specifications and subject to the terms and conditions of the contract.
Project Location	:	PICC Complex, Pasay City
Approved Budget	:	Twenty Four Million Pesos (P24,000,000.00)
Source of Funding	:	BSP Corporate Funds
Contract Duration	:	Two Hundred Seventy (270) calendar days
Minimum Requirement (Criteria)		
PCAB License	:	Registration Particular of at least "Medium A" (Building and Industrial Plant and/or Sewerage and Sewage Treatment / Disposal Plant)
Contractor's Construction Experience	:	Should have completed within the last five (5) years (2002 to present) at least three (3) projects involving design and construction of an STP facility utilizing the Sequencing Batch Reactor (SBR) Technology one of which costs not less than twelve million pesos (P12,000,000.00). In case of a joint venture, submission of a valid joint venture agreement including the special PCAB license is required. The joint venture must have previously completed at least two (2) similar construction projects involving similar magnitude as the proposed BSP project.
Certification of Satisfactory Performance	:	Should be able to submit certificates of satisfactory performance from the client of the declared completed similar projects. For those contractors who have previously done / completed BSP project/s, the certificate/s of satisfactory performance issued by the Bank for said project/s must be submitted.
Net Financial Contracting Capacity Or Credit Line or Cash Deposit Certificate	:	At least Twenty Four Million Pesos (P24,000,000.00) *computed at 10 x (current asset less current liabilities) minus (value of all on-going contracts including awarded yet to be started)* At least Two Million Four Hundred Thousand Pesos (P2,400,000.00)
Letter of Intent (LOI) / Eligibility Statement Forms		
Cost of Forms	:	Five Hundred Pesos per set (P500.00/set)
Date of Issuance	:	March 06 to 14, 2007 / 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM
Deadline of Submission	:	March 16, 2007 / 9:30 AM
Notice of Eligibility / Ineligibility		
Date of Issuance	:	March 26, 2007 / 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM
Bid / Tender Documents Issuance	:	Shall be issued only to eligible contractors upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Twelve Thousand Pesos (P12,000.00)
Date of Issuance	:	March 26 to 27, 2007 / 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM
Pre-Bid Conference		
Date and Time	:	March 30, 2007 / 10:00 AM
Venue	:	PDMO Conference Room, 2nd Floor, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo St., Manila
Submission and Opening of Bids		
Deadline of Submission	:	April 20, 2007 / 2:00 PM

For inquiries, please call BAC Secretariat - telephone no. 524-7011 local 3143.

The venue for the issuance and submission of accomplished eligibility statements and bid documents is at the BAC Secretariat, Room 204, 2nd Floor - Five Storey Building, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo St., Manila.

The schedule of bid activities from the issuance of notice of eligibility/ineligibility up to the deadline of submission of bids may be subject to change.

The provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations shall govern relative to the bidding and award of contract including its implementation.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.
Chairman

(PDI--March 6 & 13, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1660 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
JP MORGAN CHASE BANK, N.A. 31/F, Philamlife Tower, 8767 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City	Daniel J. Nacarato	Senior Operations Manager
CITIZENSSOFT, INC. Suite 30-AR3, 30/F Burgundy Corporate Tower, 252 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Edward Joseph Mangan	Resident Representative
WONDERKIDS MODELLING AGENCY, INC. No. 7, 2/F Cacho-Gonzales Bldg., 101 Aguirre St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Priscilla Meirelles De Almeida	Model
VOCATIV SYSTEMS, INC. 1L Bonifacio Tech. Ctr., 31st St. cor. 2nd Ave., East Square Global City, Taguig City	Nalini Lopes	Senior Operations Manager
WONDERPHIL CONSULTANT CORP. Unit F, 7/F Westgate Tower, Investment Drive, Madrigal Business Park, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Nam Yeol An	Assistant Supervisor
YOOHAN TRAVEL & TOURS CORP. G/F Financial Center, D. Macapagal Ave., Pasay City	Min Kyu Hwang	Assistant Tour Manager
SPACE UNLIMITED TRADE FAIR AND EXHIBITS CORPORATION Unit 1619 Mega Plaza Bldg., ADB Ave. cor Garnet St., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Seokhee Jeong	Managing Director
YTN REALTY DEVELOPMENT & MANAGEMENT, INC. 133 Aguirre Ave., BF Homes, Parañaque City	Young Kag Kwon	Senior Account Executive
MITSUBISHI CORP. 52/F PBCom Tower, 6795 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Tomohiro Yabushita	Mitsubishi Representative to Minola Refining Corporation
LAWS TEXTILE PHIL. LTD., INC. Veterans Center, Veterans Road, Taguig City	Dalyong Xiao	Vice President for Production Planning

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity. For more information, please call 339-2013 & 303-5920.

(PDI--March 13, 2007)

SUBIC BAY METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY
Bldg 229, Waterfront Road, Subic Bay Freeport Zone, Phils. 2222
Tel. No. (6347) 252-4895/4381/4382 Facsimile (6347) 252-3014
E-mail: acarreza@sbma.com / Website: http:www.sbma.com

THE SPECIAL BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE FOR THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF NCT-1 AND NCT-2

INVITATION FOR COMPARATIVE PROPOSALS

The Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) invites interested Port Operators (challengers) to participate in the challenge process for its Project ***Operation and Management of New Container Terminal-1 (NCT-1).***

Request for Comparative Proposal (RFCP)/ bid documents are available at the SBMA-Project Management Office, Engineering Department, Bldg. 29, Subic Bay Freeport Zone starting at 8:00 a.m. of **March 14, 2007 up to 5:00 p.m. of June 18, 2007** upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php100,000.00 or US$2,000.00 to the SBMA Treasury Department at Bldg. 229, Waterfront Road, SBFZ. For inquiries, please contact the Office of the SBAC at tel. nos. (6347) 252-4381 to 83, 252-4895, facsimile (6347) 252-3014 and website: http://koreyo.sbma.com.

A Pre-Proposal Conference (Pre-bid) shall be held on **May 9, 2007, 2:00 p.m.** at the SBMA Corporate Board Room, Bldg. 229, Waterfront Road, SBFZ. The deadline for submission of complete bid proposals shall be on or before 5:00 p.m. on June 18, 2007 at the SBAC Chairman's Office, Office of the Administrator and CEO, Room 205, Bldg. 229 Waterfront Road, SBFZ.

ARMAND C. ARREZA
Administrator and CEO/Chairman, SBAC for the Commercialization of NCT-1 and NCT-2

(PDI – Feb. 27; March 6 & 13, 2007)

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ON: THURSDAY 15TH MARCH 2007 - 10:30AM SHARP
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On View: Wednesday 7th March 2007 - 9am to 5pm & morning of sale day
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OBITUARIES

CORNELIO A. KITANE, SR.

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on March 11, 2007 at the age of 94.

His loving children **Bernabe** and **Ruby**, **Emilio** and **Camila**, **Cecilia**, **Lourdes** and **Teddy**, **Jun** (†) and **Helen**, **Robert** and **Cely**, **Vilma** and **Ruben**, **Eric** and **Margot**; grandchildren, great-grandchildren and other relatives request fervent prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapels, Sucat, Parañaque City.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
— 2 Corinthians 5:8

FEDERICO JAIME C. DELGADO

Peacefully joined his Creator on March 11, 2007

His bereaved father, **Francisco C. Delgado**, sisters **Isabel** and **Ana Maria**, brothers, **Ricardo**, **Jose Mari**, and **Francisco III**, in-laws, nephews, nieces and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Capilla dela Virgen, Santuario de San Antonio Parish, McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City. Funeral Mass will be at 8:00 A.M. on Wednesday, March 14, 2007. Interment will follow at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina.

In lieu of flowers please donate to Caritas Manila in his honor.

"The Lord is my strength and my shield in whom my heart trusted and found help. So my heart rejoices; With my song I praise my God ..." Psalm 28:7

ANTONIO CRUZ SANTOS

Peacefully joined our Creator on March 11, 2007 at the age of 79.

His loving wife, **Celia Geronimo Santos**; children, **Armando** & **Chona**, **Celso** & **Teresita**, **Marivic** & **Roger**; grandchildren, **Alex**, **Casey**, **Stephanie**, **Mardgoree**, **Michelle**, **MG**, **Len** and **Daryl** and all his relatives and friends request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at **Capilla C of Arlington East, The Garden Chapels, 1354 C. Raymundo St., cor. Mercedes Avenue, Brgy. San Miguel, Pasig City.**

Interment will be at Pasig Catholic Cemetery, date will be announced later.

EUGENIO NICOLAS SUAREZ y HENSON

"Tatang Geni"

September 10, 1920 – March 11, 2007
(former Mayor of Angeles City)

His beloved wife, **ESMERALDA** (†)
His siblings: **DURING** and **KATOKS** (†)
SENSING and **SOF**
TED and **RELY**
CRISA and **MADING**

His nephews and nieces are prayerfully requesting their pious friends and relatives to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Funeraria Angelina, Sto. Rosario St., Angeles City (beside Holy Angel University).

After the funeral Mass to be celebrated at the Holy Rosary Parish Church at 3:00 PM today, March 13, 2007, **Tatang Geni** will be buried at La Pieta Memorial Park, McArthur Highway, Angeles City.

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3. You can also claim the Cellphone by going to the YeapsCorp head office at unit 2306 Herrera Tower, Valero cor Rufino sts. Salcedo Village, Makati
4. Surrender the Promo Claim Stub and photocopy of the invoice upon delivery or pick-up of the Cellphone
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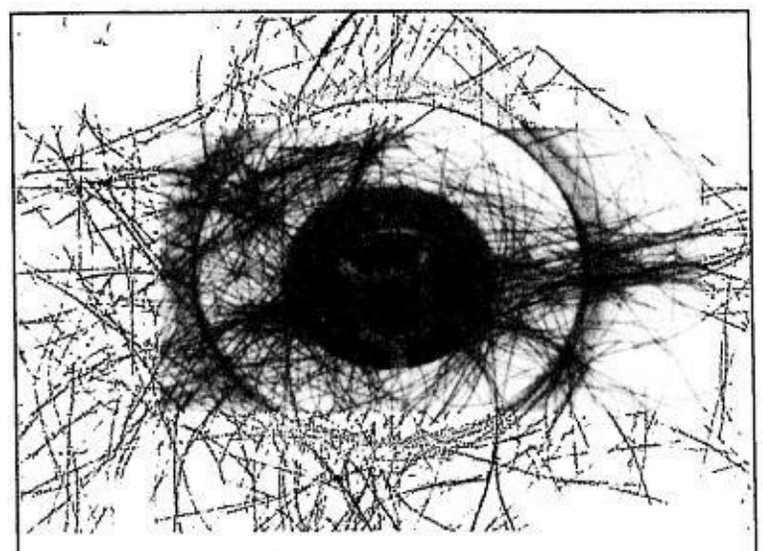
Chinese truck maker taps RP mart



By Ronnel W. Domingo

ANHUI JIANGHUAI Automobile Co. Ltd., a truck maker listed on the Shanghai Stock Exchange, has teamed up with Mitsui Trading Philippines to take a crack at the local commercial vehicle market with long-term plans of putting up an assembly plant here.

Angeli Tuazon, Mitsui Trading vice president, said in a statement that the partners planned to bring in an initial shipment of 200 units aimed at buyers of imported used trucks that are no longer legal to import.

"The success of the JAC brand in the domestic market can lead to an assembly plant being put up here, which means more foreign direct investment and more jobs to be generated," Tuazon said.

JAC, which is based in China's Anhui province, makes commercial vehicles like light, medium and heavy trucks, as well as forklifts and coach buses.

JAC was founded in 1999 but has been around since 1964 as the Hefei Jianghuai Automobile Factory. It has sold at least 300,000 completely-

CHINESE/ B4

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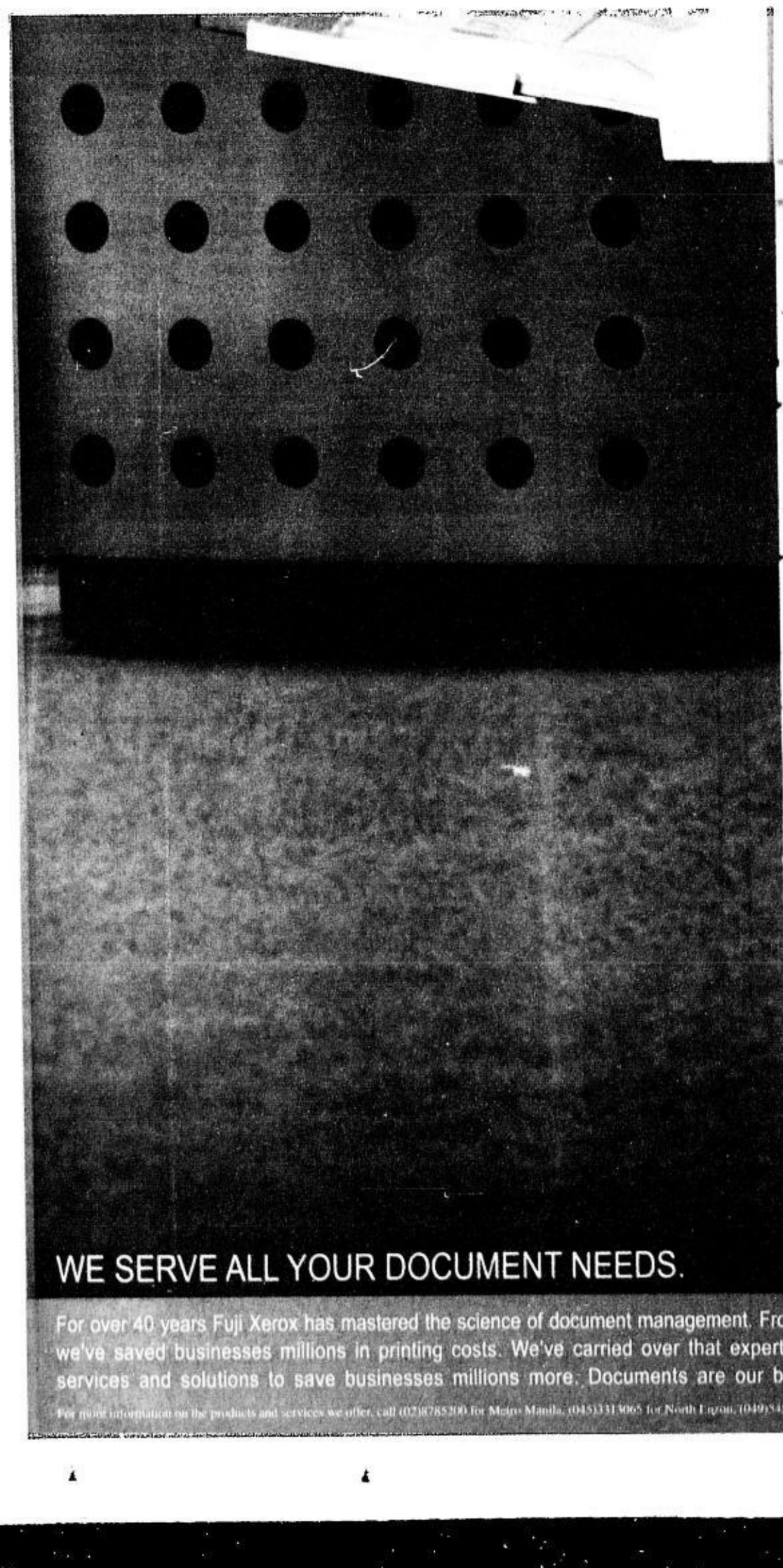

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WELL AND GOOD
Tina Juan

Best exercises for strong bones

IT IS A SAD REALITY THAT, AS you grow older, you will lose bone density. It happens to everyone to some degree. Older athletes or older people who are active will still have less bone density than their younger counterparts.

But, even though exercise can only slow down bone loss, you will still be way ahead of the game if you stay physically active. Without regular exercise, muscles and bones weaken at a much faster pace.

Muscle weakness leads to a sedentary lifestyle that leads to a loss of balance and coordination and an increased rate of bone loss, which leads to falls, which leads to complications from immobility, which can lead to premature death.

A physically active lifestyle prevents this downward spiral. Strong muscles help you maintain good balance and prevent falls.

Childhood

Osteoporosis has been called "a childhood disease with old age consequences." The strength of your bones is determined mostly by how active you were as a child.

A 1988 study found that postmenopausal women who were active between the ages of 14 and 21 had a higher bone density than women who were not as active.

British researchers found that daily vigorous exercise (20-40 minutes) and a daily calcium intake of 700-800 mg was the best formula for building bones in children. "Vigorous" exercise was defined as the normal playground activities and sports that children engaged in.

Other studies have shown that stop-and-go multi-directional sports like soccer and basketball are useful for improving bone density in children. Jumping has also been shown to be effective for young girls and young women.

A 10-year Penn State University study determined that exercise had a more significant impact on building bones than calcium intake for girls aged 12-22.

Weight bearing

Bones need to be challenged or "stressed" with an appropriate amount of force to become denser and stronger. And, even though the best time to build bone is during childhood, exercise plays a role in slowing down the rate of bone loss as you get older.

Current research indicates that weight-bearing exercises are the best for bone strengthening. There are two categories—resistance training and impact exercise.

When muscles pull bones against resistance, the bones are stimulated and respond by becoming stronger. Resistance can come in the form of free weights (dumbbells and barbells), strength machines, cables, springs or rubber bands, water (aqua exercise), and body weight (chin-ups, push-ups, yoga, wall climbing, stair climbing).

Walking, running, hiking, skipping rope, dancing and aerobic classes are examples of impact exercise. Your bones are stimulated by the impact of every step you take while carrying your body weight. Racquet sports and boxing are impact sports for the upper body as well.

Site-specific

The bone strengthening benefits of exercise are site-specific. Only the specific areas where muscles tug at bones or where weight-bearing impact is applied will get stronger. In sports where one limb is used more than the other, the weight-loaded extremity has a higher bone density than the other.

Lower body exercises like squats and lunges will make the leg and hipbones stronger but not so much the spine. People who lift weights for the upper body have spines that are 10 percent denser than runners.

This means you need to cross-train or do a variety of exercises to get the full benefits of bone strengthening.

Weight training

A 2003 study suggests that postmenopausal women will have greater gains in bone density if they do weight-lifting exercises like the bicep curl, lat pulldown and military press in a standing rather than sitting position.

Upper body strength training with weights increased the spinal bone density of women aged 35-45 by 1.4 percent in an Oregon State University study. Women who did only lower body exercises like squats and lunges did not see any increases in spinal bone density.

In studies of young and middle-aged women, muscle strength is positively associated with higher bone densities. For older and elderly women, strength training is important because strong muscles prevent unnecessary falls.

Long-term use of immuno-suppressant drugs can lead to premature osteoporosis or brittle bones. It was previously believed that

BEST/ C3

CLIP & SAVE

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Letter V arms & legs

This exercise strengthens the chest, inner thighs and core muscles.

Equipment:

Exercise mat and a pair of dumbbells. Ankle weights are optional.

Exercise technique:

1. Lie on your back with your legs straight above your hips.

2. Hold a dumbbell in each hand, directly above your shoulder joint with the palms facing the knees.

3. Simultaneously lower arms and legs halfway between the starting position and the floor.

4. Bring your arms and legs back in together.

5. Do the desired number of repetitions.

Performance tips:

1. Maintain control of your arm and leg muscles throughout the exercise.

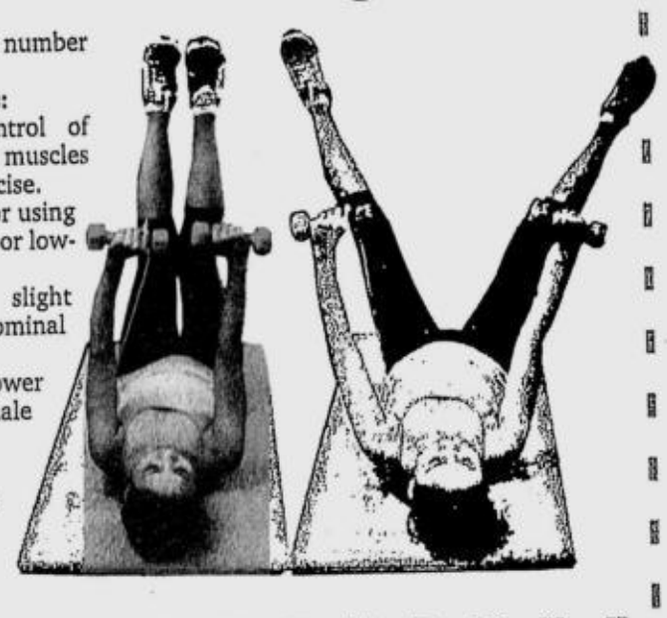
2. Avoid jerking or using momentum to raise or lower the weight.

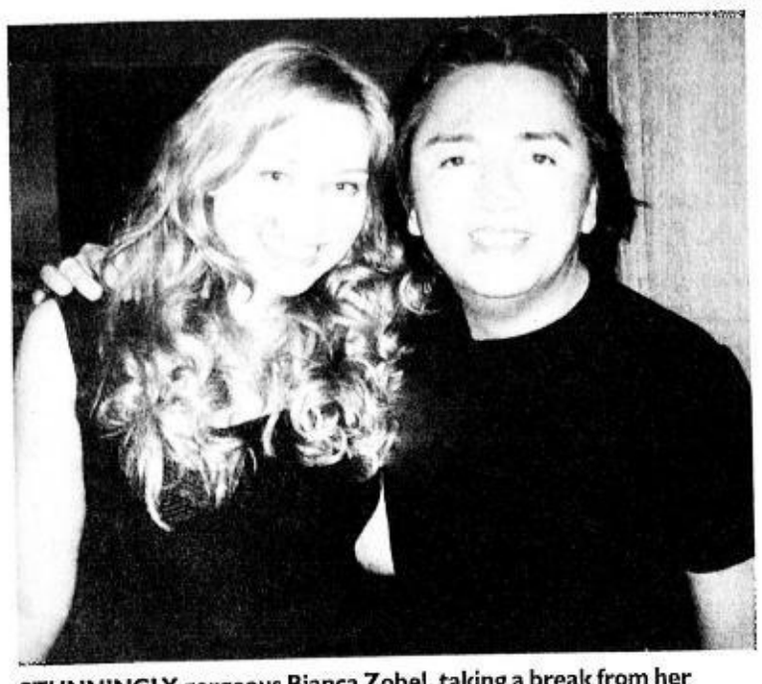
3. Maintain a slight tightness in the abdominal area.

4. Inhale as you lower arms and legs; exhale on the return.

Repetitions:

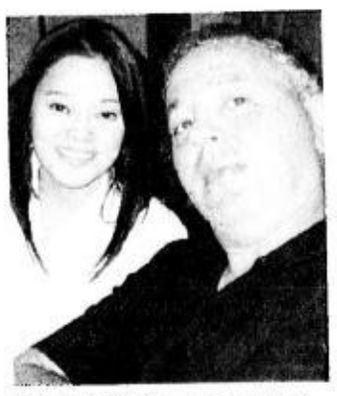
Do 10-15 repetitions.





STUNNINGLY gorgeous Bianca Zobel, taking a break from her studies in Madrid with the celebrator, architect Anton Mendoza

ACE photographer Alex Van Hagen with close pal Pepper Teehankee



RUSTAN'S Rhoda Campos-Aldanese and businessman Sinai Sigalit

MAURICE Arcache (as in *moi*) and Menchu Montecon

HOSTESSES with the mostest: Carla Reyes Tengco and Sigalit Djemal

Japanese dinner becomes a Mediterranean feast

IT WAS A SURPRISE BIRTHDAY PARTY. And, wow, was he surprised!

In-demand architect **Anton Mendoza** dashed to his gorgeous New York-style condominium unit from a meeting with a client in Tagaytay to get dressed and rush to the popular Hei Chin Lou Japanese Resto where he had been invited for dinner by close pal **Carla Tengco**.

What the birthday boy didn't know was Carla T. invited several of his closest pals. Top chef and gourmand **Sigalit Djemal** took care of the excellent to-die-for Mediterranean dinner. Sigalit's Kitchen, by the way, makes unmatchable yummy caviar pie.

We came 30 minutes early. *Moi* watched out for Anton.

Well, when he entered his pad all the lights were off. His jaw dropped as we all shouted, "Surprise!", as the lights were turned on, *palanggas*.

The cocktail food (also prepared by Sigalit D.) was yummy enough for guests to skip dinner if they wanted, dahlings.

The party really got rolling as more invitees arrived. It was way past 4 a.m. before we dragged ourselves home.

Hey, isn't that what a fun bash is all about, *palanggas*?

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH
Maurice Arcache
Photos by Alex Van Hagen using Kodak EasyShare system

Bienvenida

You can be sure of a smashingly fun bash when your guests are real close and new pals. The get-together was a fun, fun welcome-home bash for Fila's top lady, the tireless, dynamic and gorgeous **Cris Albert**, who finished her second year at the prestigious Harvard University, no less, *palanggas*.

The night started at the super popular Serendra, with cocktails at quaint bar Fez. Then the whole pack moved to *tres* in-demand Italian restaurant Balducci, which serves fabulous Tuscan food, for dinner. The group included **Deena Garcia, Irene Yulo, Nini Cosca, Owen Bobadilla, Frances Cebrero, Carol Valeda, Cris A.'s** sister **Ana Bitong**, with Repertory hot actors **Rem Zamora, Cathy Azanza, Jamie Wilson, Miguel Faustmann, Juno Henares** and **Michael Williams**, plus other fun personas like them, *palanggas*.

Capping the evening was more fun and dancing under the stars at the rooftop of Luce Bar. Many of the guests lost track of time. That's how much fun it was, dahlings.

Welcome home, Harvardian Cris!

Bedan achievement

The lions were roaring when those red-blooded Bedans had the annual Red and White Ball to honor its outstanding men and women.

Organized by the San Beda College Alumni Association (SBCAA), the evening's theme was "Celebrating Bedan Achievement."

Leading the Bedan awardees was the late **Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino**, who was elevated to the San Beda Hall of Fame. Former President **Cory Aquino** graced the awarding rites at the NBC Tent, Fort Bonifacio, *palanggas*. Other Bedans who were elevated posthumously to the Hall of Fame were Chief Justice **Roberto Concepcion**, renowned painter **Alfredo Carmelo**, and Maj. Gen. **Basilio Valdes**. Basketball hero **Tata Carranceja** was elevated to the Sports Hall of Fame.

Dr. **Luis Kodumal** of Philadelphia was chosen Most Outstanding Overseas Bedan. The other 12 distinguished Bedans included Court of Appeals Justice **Francisco Acosta** (Law), Supreme Court Justice **Antonio Eduardo Nachura** (Government Service), Toyota Pasong Tamo president **Arturo Macapagal** (Business and Industry), **Mukesh Asvani** (Sports Service), Comelec Commissioner **Rene Sarmiento Jr.** (Government Service) and **Alfred "Krip" Yuson** (Creative Writing/Journalism).

Then the real fun began led by PLDT chair, brilliant **Manny V. Pangilinan.** The must-have Rigodon de Honor was followed by a performance by singing sensation **Bituin Escalante.** Bedan crooner **Calvin Millado** was the ball's host. Acclaimed Bedan stylist **Rachy Cuna**, no less, designed obelisk trophies for the awardees.

The affair honored anew the Red Lions, 2006 NCAA champions.

The super well-attended affair proved once again that San Beda College has indeed a legacy of producing stellar achievers in society.

Go, Bedans, go!

New book

"People are the cultural ambassadors of today's world. From the Philippines, Singapore and America, in divergent spheres of life—in literature, the visual arts, in diplomacy, in architecture and urban planning." This is a passage from the must-have book "Between East and West."

Written by the brilliant and articulate **Tonette Martel**, the book is a collection of essays on places, themes and ideas that give meaning to the times we live in. It explores the melding of the heritage of East and West, *palanggas*, and the cultural exchanges between them.

Tonette says, "[The book] taught me that people are more similar than they are different. We all share the same hopes, dreams, fears and aspirations. Yet each culture has a unique way of expressing these realities. We live in a world today that compels us to open our eyes to many truths all at once.

"I hope the reader will come away with the notion that we are a part of one world—that the cultural aspects of East and West and the merging of both will continue to shape our lives and stay with us."

Born and raised in Manila, Tonette has a Bachelors of Arts degree from the prestigious Marymount Manhattan College in New York and a Master of Arts degree from New York University. She has written articles on arts and culture, travel, and social issues for over a decade.

She served as consultant on policy and technical services to the office of the vice president of the Philippines, speech writer to the president of the Philippines, and special assistant to the office of the presidential spokesman. She was invited to be vice chair of the Gala Committee of the 2007 International Asian Art Fair "Opening Night Benefit Preview" in New York, no less, dahlings.

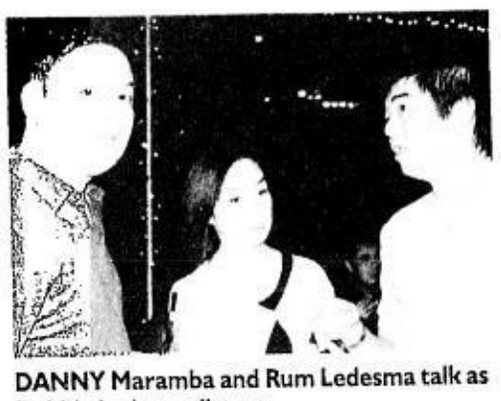
Check out "Between East and West" which will be launched March 15 at the elegant Red resto in the Makati Shangri-La. A portion of book sales will benefit the Virlanie Foundation, *palanggas*. Be there, *palanggas*!

EYE-CATCHING cake by Marta Matute has the favorite brands of celebrator Anton M.

BRILLIANT and articulate author Tonette P. Martel

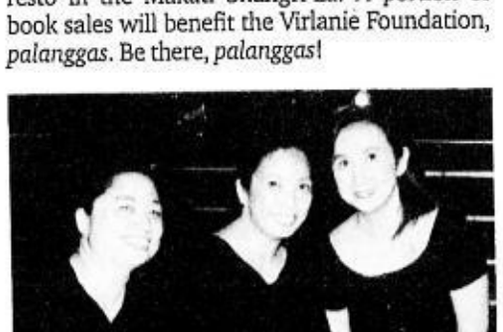
STAGE actors Rem Zamora, Joy Virata and Michael Williams

HIP PARTYGOERS: Greg Concepcion, Chesca Campo, Phoebe Chen and Ira Sonina



DANNY Maramba and Rum Ledesma talk as Debbie Ledesma listens.

TV'S BOYET Sison, handsome Randy Soliven and fun Perry Aragon



BLACK BRIGADE: Richie Zamora, Lea Banaag, Joyce Aragon

REPERTORY STARS: Juno Henares, Jamie Wilson, Ana Bitong, Robie Zialcita

TATLER'S Anton San Diego and businessman Vince Aldanese

LEAH Valencia

ASIAN Spirit CEO Noel Oñate, businessman Al Tengco and Rep. Tony Boy Floirendo

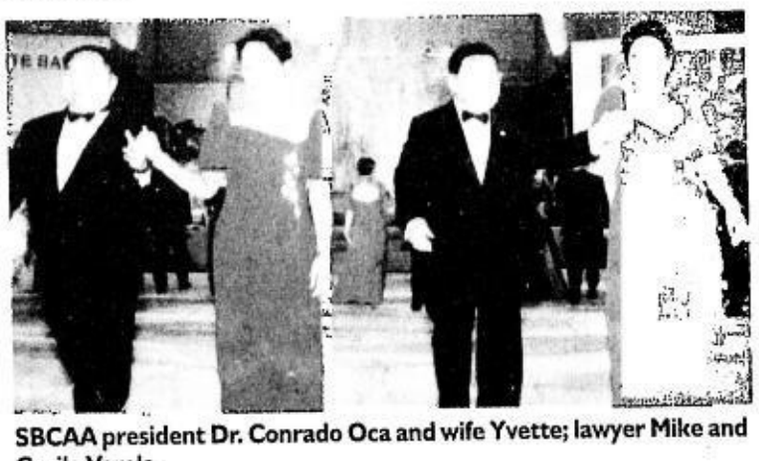
DISTINGUISHED Women of Service are Sonia Roco, Ana Periquet and Nikki Coseteng

REP. ARNULFO Fuentebella receives the Ramon Mitra Award for Legislation.

BEDAN Dr. Joey and Mabel Abaño

MAYOR Sonny Belmonte receives the Raul Roco Award for Public Service Excellence.

BEDAN lawyer Pocholo Martinez and Linabel Villarica



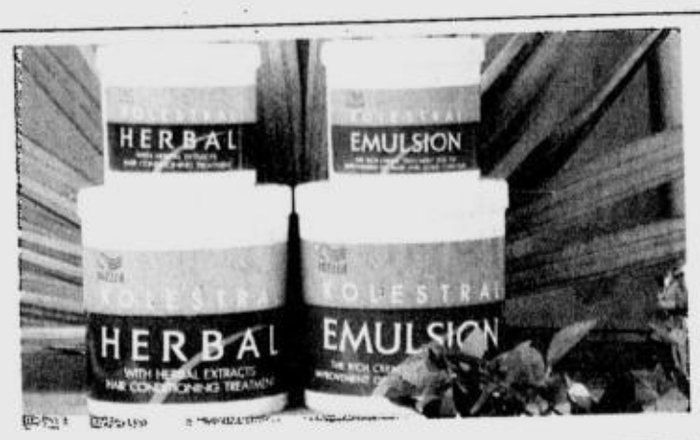
SBCAA president Dr. Conrado Oca and wife Yvette; lawyer Mike and Cecile Varela

MARTIN Araneta and Miki Arce

CHUCK Severino and Angela Genato

MARY Jane de la Cruz, Joan de la Cruz, Dara J.; (seated) Deena G., Cris A., Nini Cosca and Irene R.

CLOSE PALS: Frances Cebrero, Carol Valeda, Owen Bobadilla, Joan de la Cruz, Deena Garcia, Irene Razon, honoree Cris Albert and Dara Joson



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Fitness chain now in Manila

SHAPE UP AT DFiT on the second floor of Dusit Hotel Nikko in Makati City.

Dusit Hotels & Resorts' branded fitness chain in the Asia-Pacific region, DFiT's concept aims to offer "improved health, wellness and athletic skills" in the comfort of a deluxe hotel.

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Your Doctor Knows Best

Nelson S. Abelardo, MD, FPCP, FPCC

Question:

I have read that cardiovascular diseases are the number one killers among Filipinos. What are these diseases and what would put me at risk of having these?

Doctor says...

Yes, it is true that cardiovascular diseases or CVD are the number one cause of death not only in the Philippines but worldwide. From the term itself, cardiovascular diseases are the diseases of the heart (cardio) and the blood vessels, which include your arteries and veins (vascular).

Cardiovascular diseases involve a wide spectrum of conditions. These include angina (chest pain) and myocardial infarction (heart attack) that result when the blood vessels supplying oxygen to the heart are affected. These may also manifest as stroke or brain attack and peripheral vascular disease, associated with obstruction of blood flow in the arteries supplying your extremities.

The occurrence of these diseases is an interplay between genetics and the environment, which means one's habits and lifestyles. The risk factors for the development of cardiovascular diseases may be divided into two -- non-modifiable and modifiable. Non-modifiable factors are those that you cannot change such as being male, increasing age and having a family history of cardiovascular disease. On the other hand, modifiable factors are those that you can change. These include smoking, high blood pressure, diabetes mellitus, obesity, lack of exercise and high blood cholesterol.

Evolutionary trends in the management of cardiovascular diseases have changed from disease specific and symptomatic relief-focused to a more comprehensive and holistic approach. Just to reiterate, the risk of developing a particular disease is an interplay of the mentioned risk factors. No risk factor is an island. Most of these usually occur in clusters. Thus early identification and evaluation by your doctor is necessary for these risk factors to be addressed properly.

Take hypertension as an example. Its occurrence and increasing incidence can be attributed to different risk factors, which if not addressed correctly, taking into consideration the presence of other concomitant conditions, could lead to fatal consequences.

Modern medicine has a lot to offer and patients need not wait, wither and die. New modalities and treatment options are being introduced, scrutinized, evaluated and utilized to promote a better management plan. Effective, safe and tolerable medicines in combination with equally important lifestyle changes are at hand to combat these diseases.

You and your doctor need to be vigilant, cautious, multidirectional, holistic and not disease-specific. Its time to see the person behind the disease as a whole, taking into account the different factors that puts him/her at risk for developing cardiovascular diseases. There are sufficient time and resources to modify these factors, and many new treatment modalities improve greatly the healthcare delivery systems.

For proper guidance, evaluation and management, please consult your doctor.

Dr. Abelardo is a cardiologist. He is the Chief of the Section of Cardiovascular Medicine, Philippine General Hospital (PGH). He holds clinics at Manila Doctors Hospital and Asian Hospital and Medical Center. Dr. Abelardo is also an Associate Professor in the Department of Medicine, University of the Philippines, College of Medicine.

This column is supported by AstraZeneca Philippines as part of its disease awareness campaign. This is not intended to replace the advice of a healthcare professional. Always consult your doctor.

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Best exercises for strong bones

From page C1

the bone loss was irreversible. However, a University of Florida experiment proved that some of the bone mass can be recovered through resistance training.

Two groups of lung transplant patients were put on either a walking program or a supervised resistance training program for the lower back. After six months, there was no change in the bone mass of the walkers but the resistance training patients increased bone mass in their lumbar spine by 15 percent.

Sources: National Osteoporosis Foundation
American College of Sports Medicine
American Council on Exercise
Harvard School of Public Health
Mayo Clinic

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

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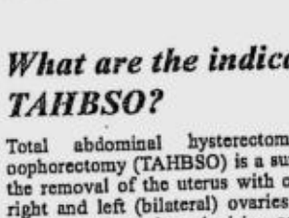
Take Charge Doc!

What are the indications for TAHBSO?

Total abdominal hysterectomy & bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy (TAHBSO) is a surgical procedure that involves the removal of the uterus with cervix (hysterectomy) and the right and left (bilateral) ovaries (oopho) and fallopian tubes (salpingo) through an incision on the abdominal wall. This is one of the most common procedures done by the gynecologists, here in the Philippines and abroad. There are several indications for abdominal hysterectomy and majority of which are due to an abnormality or a lesion of the uterus itself, or from an abnormality or lesion of the attached ovaries or fallopian tubes. The uterine lesions that may necessitate TAHBSO include: leiomyoma, adenomyosis, pelvic inflammatory disease, complex endometrial hyperplasia, carcinoma of the endometrium and dysfunctional uterine bleeding. An additional indication for TAHBSO is surgery for stress incontinence. Patients seem to have better long-term results if the uterus is removed, which should pose no problem when childbearing has been completed. These aforementioned indications for TAHBSO are the more commonly encountered conditions in general gynecologic practice. The uterus is an important female organ created by God primarily to house an embryo, who under proper care and nutrition may be delivered into a healthy fetus after nine months. The child-bearing capacity of the female must always be taken into consideration when deciding to undergo the surgery. Furthermore, the removal of the uterus does not always require the removal both ovaries. In the institution I am connected with, we are routinely including the normal ovaries as well when patient is beyond 45 years old. TAHBSO is a major gynecologic surgical procedure and it is very important to establish solid patient-doctor communication in order that the patient would understand the indications and post-op consequences of the procedure.



This week's answer to our feature question is provided by our accredited Gynecologist in Bagumbayan City, Dr. Jo-Ann Ballesteros-Badua. Dra. Jo-ann, who has a sub-specialty in Gynecologic endoscopy has been in practice for 15 years. She was the Past Chairman of the Department of OB-Gyne in SLUHSH and also the Past President of POGS Region I. Currently she is a professor in St. Louis University College of Medicine. MEDICard members may avail for her consultations at Notre Dame De Chartres Hospital every Wednesday 9-5pm and at St. Louis University Hospital from Monday to Friday 3-5pm except Wednesday

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquirys@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

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INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

Can you have wellness to go?

Though cures for some problems may be instant, real health takes time

IT'S THE ERA OF FAST FOOD, instant messaging and Internet shopping. People all over the world are in a hurry, hence, the expression "I want it done yesterday."

But is there also such a thing as instant health?

According to health experts, the answer is no. Though cures for some health problems may be instant, real health takes time—and commitment. And wellness is achieved when it is holistic, involving the cooperation of mind and body.

But there are simple, easy-to-do steps for a workable, livable regimen for wellness. Here are a few habits you may want to adopt.

Waking up

The start of a good day begins the moment you open your eyes after a good night's sleep. Wake up gently and slowly. Do a stretch while still in bed.

Getting up earlier than everyone else at home will allow you uninterrupted quiet time to pray, meditate and plan your day.

Getting started

Breakfast is essential. You may have whatever breakfast you want, just do not skip this important meal of the day.

But if you want energy to sustain you, choose a healthy one. Eat something substantial and nutritious. Fruits, whole grain cereals/bread and oatmeal are excellent choices. If you are a rice eater, that's okay, too. Just do everything in moderation.

Getting through the day

- Drink up. Water, that is. Every hour, have a glass of clean, purified (if possible, alkaline) water, even if you do not feel thirsty.
- Take slow, regular breaths each time you feel you are too excitable, nervous and tense. Deliberately slow down your breathing. This ought to control your stress levels.
- Catnap whenever you have the chance. Studies have shown that people who take short naps are better able to handle stress.
- Transform your office into a mini spa garden. Bring the outdoors indoors. A potted plant or mini water fountain can easily put you and your clients, boss at ease. This way your office will not add to your stress.
- Whenever possible, stand up from your office chair and take small walks. This will not only improve blood circulation but also clear your mind. Thinking too much for too long can wear you down. So, take that walk.
- Find the time for regular exercise. A regimen of physical workouts can only make you feel better not just look better.

Prolonging the hours

Even if it is after-hours, long past the five o'clock rush at day's end, your day isn't quite over. What to do?

- Have a body stretch while relaxing your neck and back.
- Load up on energy food, like fruits and vegetables.
- Follow with your extra supplement of Vitamin C and B complex.
- Drink alcoholic beverages in moderation. And eat solid food between drinks.
- At the sign of the first yawn, listen to your body signal. It's time to call it a day.

Nightcap:

The best day-ender is a hot relaxing bath. Close your eyes and declare, "A good day deserves another!"

Love and light!

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime Licauco

When signs are ignored

Part 2

WHAT HAPPENED TO ME GAVE ME valuable insights and lessons in life.

Most of us ignore our health. We do not stop smoking until we develop emphysema or, worse, lung cancer; we do not stop pushing ourselves, working hard like a carabao, until we have a heart attack; we do not stop eating junk food until we develop diabetes, ulcer or colon cancer; and men will not stop having unsafe sex with multiple partners until they develop AIDS, and so on.

Before a fatal illness strikes, there are usually warning signs. Even those so-called silent heart attacks (that are symptomless) have some subtle early signs, if we but listen to our bodies more carefully.

It is said that 30 days before a person dies (even when seemingly accidental), the soul already knows. Again, our problem is failure to listen, not absence of warnings or signs.

Long before this heart ailment struck me, I had already been warned by my doctors and friends to slow down. Antonio, my eldest brother, a medical doctor, was telling me the same thing.

Time bomb

Dr. Sandra Torres, former medical director of a large pharmaceutical company, told me I was "a walking time bomb." And even a highly evolved spirit from the upper fifth dimension, Ang Suh, told his medium, Dr. Helen Manguera de Garriz, on Jan. 10, two weeks before I was confined, "Jimmy has to stop [what he is doing] otherwise his body will give way, and death or disability will ensue. Too much electricity [in the body] will destroy the source itself and all branches which carry the current, causing destruction."

The warning signs were all there: elevated blood pressure, panting when walking up the stairs to the second floor, and the need for stronger medication to keep my blood pressure down.

Being a Type A personality did not help my condition at all. Type A people are always pushing themselves too hard, always ahead of time for appointments and very demanding in whatever they

do. They are short-tempered, impatient and always in a hurry.

My almost two weeks' stay in the hospital gave me valuable insights and lessons I never would have taken seriously if this near-fatal incident did not happen.

- First lesson: Working too hard and not taking time off for leisure or vacation is foolish and not worth it. For years, I've worked at least 10 hours a day, seven days a week without letup. My children often complained they hardly saw me anymore.

I enjoyed what I was doing and didn't realize my body and my family were being neglected. Like most people, I always justified it, saying "because of the need to earn a living," which was also true.

In my case, I also felt it my mission to disseminate information that had been kept secret for so long. I soon realized there were other priorities that mattered more than work.

- I failed to exercise, not even simple walking. I was leading a dangerously sedentary and cerebral life, one devoted to the mind and the spirit rather than to the body.
- In the hospital, I learned what it meant to relax and just do nothing. I kept asking myself one question that I realized I didn't have the answer to. "If I died, then what would become of all these things I've been doing?" They will cease to exist, not to be remembered forever more.

Everything in the world is temporary. Our life is temporary. Having a near-fatal heart attack gave me a profound feeling of helplessness, sadness and what one great poet said, "intimations of mortality."

The other thing I realized was that I was completely at the mercy of my physician and the pharmaceutical industry.

Caring people

One of the positive things that came out of this incident was the realization that so many people cared and were genuinely concerned about what happened to me. My daughter Sophia, who has been living in California for the last 15 years, suddenly flew back to Manila to be with me, although she was out of a job.

I received so many encouraging text messages and telephone calls from friends, relatives and even from total strangers. One typical message said, "You have touched the lives of so many people by your teachings and writings. And they are all praying for your safe and swift recovery."

The wife of a prominent and high-ranking government official sent fruits, flowers and a miraculous statue of Our Lady of Manaoag.

A well-known but very controversial journalist, television and radio host donated a substantial amount of money without being asked, "It is my dharma," he told me.

So did another very prominent woman journalist who sent a check for my huge hospital bill. Although what she gave was large enough, she said, "I wish I could have given more," when I called to thank her.

I felt the outpouring of strong healing energy directed at me during my confinement at the Intensive Care Unit and especially when my angiogram and angioplasty were being performed so expertly by Doctor Dy and his associates.

My recovery was very fast. Just two days after these procedures, I was discharged from the hospital, a bit poorer perhaps, but a hundred times wiser about life.

Note: The next Basic ESP and Intuition Development seminar will be on March 17-18, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Interested parties may call 8107245, 8926806 or fax 8159890.

E-mail jtlicauco@tri-isys.com

TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2007

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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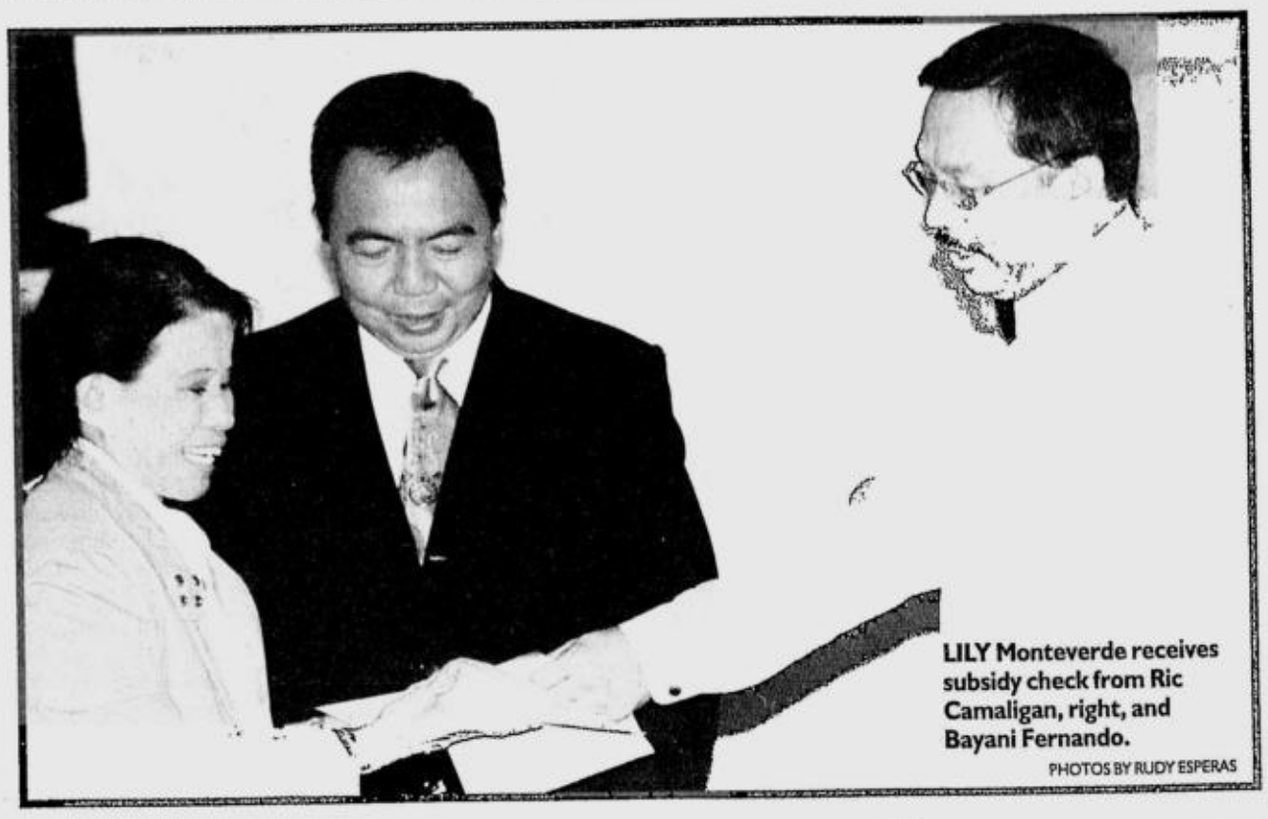


LILY Monteverde receives subsidy check from Ric Camaligan, right, and Bayani Fernando.

PHOTOS BY RUDY ESPERAS

Annual film fest is launched with a party for last year's winners

FERNANDO and Boots Anson-Roa, left; Gina Pareño and Jose Javier Reyes, above.

ABOVE, from L: Undersecretary Robert Rivera, Espiridion Laxa and MMDA's Rolando Josef. Erik Santos, L, sings for the guests.

Industry gears up for MMFF '07

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

IN SPITE OF THE CONTROVERsies that hounded last December's Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF), Bayani Fernando partied with industry leaders as usual.

At one point, Fernando, chair of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA, which spearheads the MMFF), shook hands with 2007 Best Actor winner (now senatorial candidate) Cesar Montano, who was one of the film fest's most vociferous critics only three months ago.

The MMFF came under fire last year after OctoArts' "Enteng Kabisote 3" beat Star Cinema's "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo" in the Best Picture category, even though the latter ran away with the lion's share of trophies.

Friends again

Although he won Best Actor (for "Ligalig"), Montano questioned the jurors' decision.

At the party, however, Montano and Fernando gamely posed for photographers, "as if nothing happened," MMFF executive committee member Ric Camaligan told INQUIRER Entertainment.

"I'm now OK with [the MMFF officials]," said Montano. "Love-love *na kami*."

He was expected at the administration party's rally in Cebu on Friday evening; he showed up at the MMFF event instead, accompanied by his wife Sunshine.

"One thing I've learned from the [MMFF] controversy is that I should make a movie for children," Montano said. "I'm thinking of making one with my daughter Angelina, if Sunshine permits it."

The festival executive committee mounted the traditional appreciation dinner at the Wack-Wack Golf and Country Club in Mandaluyong City.

Cash prizes

During the gathering, subsidies of the participating producers were awarded, as well as the cash prizes for winners.

"The execom didn't change the amount [for prizes] from last year," Camaligan noted.

Producers were given P750,000 for each entry, he said. On top of the subsidies, winners in the Best Picture race got cash prizes—P850,000 for "Enteng 3," P500,000 for "Kasal" and P300,000 for "Shake, Rattle & Roll 8."

Winners in major categories received P100,000 each, said Camaligan. Those in the other categories cinched P50,000 each.

Lily Monteverde, Regal producer, told the INQUIRER that she received a check amounting to P3 million. "That's because I had four movies. I am so thankful. This is a big help for producers."

No problems

She had "no problems with the MMFF," Monteverde clarified, and that she "might still join this year's festival, if I find the right scripts."

Johnny Delgado, Best Supporting Actor ("Ligalig") winner, and Gina Pareño, Best Supporting Actress ("Kasal"), were present. Best Actress Judy Ann Santos ("Kasal") was in Camiguin, said her manager Alfie Lorenzo, shooting "underwater cemetery scenes" for her latest movie, "Ouija."

"That's a valid excuse," Lorenzo stressed. "So the MMFF didn't sanction her and, in fact, gave her the full prize money."

Another no-show was Malou Santos, Star Cinema executive producer and the first to criticize the jurors' decision to award Best Picture to "Enteng 3."

Representing Star Cinema were supervising producer Tess V. Fuentes and "Kasal" director/scriptwriter Jose Javier Reyes, who won in three categories (Director, Story and Screenplay).

Calendar

The calendar of activities for this year's MMFF was announced that evening.

Set tomorrow is a meeting with producers, regarding festival rules, which are currently being reviewed, said Camaligan.

May 18 is the deadline for submission of scripts. On June 15, the official 10 entries will be announced.

The festival will run for 14 days, as usual—from Dec. 25 to Jan. 7. Awards night is on Jan. 4, 2008.

"This calendar is flexible," said Camaligan, "but we intend to strictly enforce all the deadlines."

6 cougar attacks on 'Hunter Hunted'

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC Channel (NGC) presents "Hunter Hunted: Cougars," an investigation into the series of cougar attacks which included a four-year-old victim defended by her mother and a tugboat captain who fought for his survival.

The program follows two teams of experts as they probe into six cougar attacks on Vancouver Island, home to a vast array of wildlife including black bears, wolves and the most successful land mammal in the Western Hemisphere—the cougar.

The feature premieres tonight at 8 p.m., with replays tomorrow, 7 a.m. and March 20, 11 a.m.

Next "Hunter Hunted" feature airs on March 25, 11 p.m., with the Cape Buffalo as subject.

Disasters

Tomorrow, at 9 p.m., the story of the Titanic is featured in the Wednesday series "Seconds from Disaster," which started last week. The series deconstructs the chain of events leading to the world's biggest tragedies. Next week's featured story is the Asian Tsunami.

Secret predilections exposed

CATE Blanchett and Dame Judi Dench in "Notes On A Scandal"

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

REVIEW

LIKE ANY STORY THAT REVOLVES around dirty secrets, "Notes On A Scandal" relies heavily on the unavoidable discovery and the disastrous consequences of some truths. It has soap-ish twists and turns but is able to tell the modern-day tale interestingly and explore the masked predilections of two different women.

Chameleon-lilke

Cate Blanchett and Dame Judi Dench give splendid performances as the women harboring the controversial secrets, making the film by Richard Eyre ("Iris") watchable from the outset.

The two chameleon-like actresses blend seamlessly in the school setting where their characters become friends. Sheba (Blanchett) is the new art teacher, a mother of two who's quickly befriended by the spinster history teacher Barbara (Dench). The friendship seems innocent at first, until parts narrated by Barbara, who writes her uncensored thoughts in a diary, unfold. We soon discover that the old lady isn't as harmless as she appears. Her words reveal that she's manipulative, judgmental and has stalker-like tendencies. Sheba, she believes, will fall for her; it's only a matter of time.

Sheba isn't exactly what you'd call the epitome of perfection, either. She won't admit it to her husband (Bill Nighy), but she feels their marriage is crumbling. She temporarily escapes by sleeping with a 15-year-old student (Andrew Simpson), who's more than happy to be of service. Barbara discovers this illicit pairing but promises to keep mum if Sheba ends the affair immediately. One can practically hear her cackling with joy. A revealing and creepily worded journal entry best expresses her feelings.

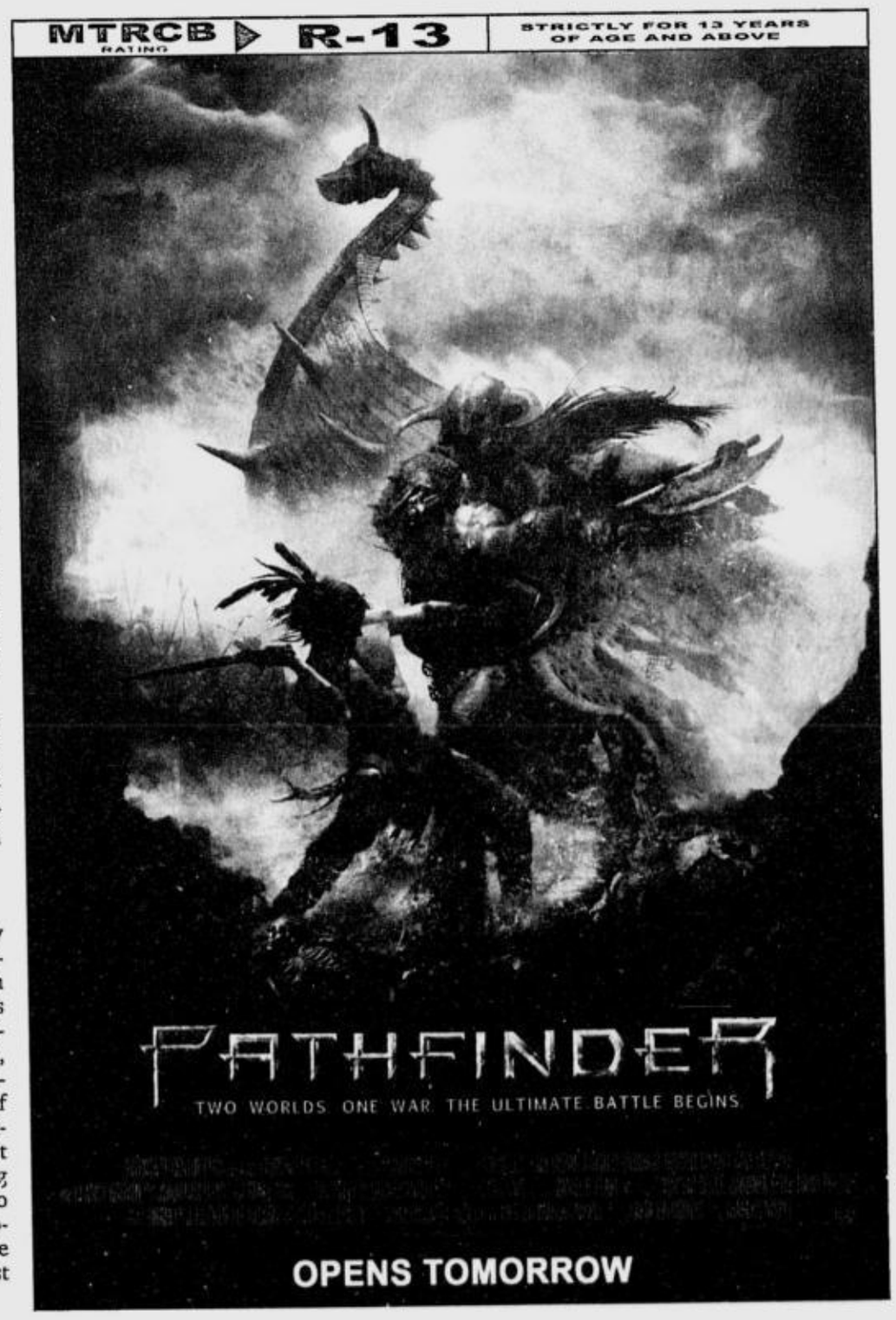
Dimensions

The screenplay by Patrick Marber, based on the book by Zoe Heller, gives sufficient room for the characters to show different dimensions. It's easy to appreciate the twisted wit inherent in Barbara's occasional narration and in the reactions of Sheba's family when the women's obsessions get out of hand. It's also funny and a little heartbreaking when Sheba tries to justify her fling with the young paramour to her caustic confidant: "But he's quite mature for his age."

Aside from Dench and Blanchett's inspired portrayals, there's also Nighy's commanding presence as the wronged husband. Teenage actor Simpson, the boy who successfully charms the art teacher, fills the role in charismatic fashion.

Consequences

"Notes On A Scandal" adequately deals with a subject that has occasionally made the news—forbidden teacher-student relations—and this makes it easily recognizable and intriguing. The exploits of a deluded, frustrated Barbara are handled appealingly, too. But while only one of the two women suffers a real meltdown, there are consequences that will hound both of them for a long time. And, while neither of the two main characters can claim innocence, you might later sympathize with one of them, the one who just may be considered the lesser evil.



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SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 THE PROMISE
4 GHOST RIDER
5 PRIMEVAL
6 THE HITCHER
7 300
8 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
9 YOU GOT ME
10 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
11 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
12 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 300
2 GHOST RIDER
3 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
4 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
5 YOU GOT ME
6 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
7 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
8 DEAD PEOPLE 2
9 THE HITCHER
10 PRIMEVAL

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 300
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
4 THE HITCHER
5 GHOST RIDER
6 YOU GOT ME

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 300
2 THE HITCHER
3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
4 300
5 YOU GOT ME
6 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
7 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
8 GHOST RIDER
9 PRIMEVAL

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 300
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 THE HITCHER

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 300
2 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
3 THE HITCHER
4 GHOST RIDER
5 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
6 300
7 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS
8 PRIMEVAL
9 YOU GOT ME
10 DEAD PEOPLE 2
11 EPIC MOVIE
12 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

SM CITY DASMARIÑAS (046)4033201-04
1 300
2 YOU GOT ME
3 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
4 FLUSHED AWAY

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 300
2 FLUSHED AWAY
3 PRIMEVAL
4 YOU GOT ME

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 300
3 YOU GOT ME
4 THE HITCHER

movietime exclusive presents
CATCH AND RELEASE
Now Showing at SM Cinema Manila
Official Media Partner: YEHEY!
Distributed by Columbia Pictures
MTRCB Rating: PG-13

LUZON

SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868
1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 THE HITCHER
3 GHOST RIDER
4 PRIMEVAL
5 300
6 YOU GOT ME
7 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
8 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 300
2 GHOST RIDER
3 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
4 PRIMEVAL
5 YOU GOT ME
6 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 EPIC MOVIE
2 FLUSHED AWAY
3 YOU GOT ME
4 PRIMEVAL

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 THE FOUNTAIN
2 GHOST RIDER
3 YOU GOT ME
4 PRIMEVAL

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 GHOST RIDER
2 300
3 THE PROMISE
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
6 YOU GOT ME

SM CITY LIPA (043) 756-7925
1 NUMBER 23
2 PRIMEVAL
3 YOU GOT ME
4 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 YOU GOT ME
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
4 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 YOU GOT ME
2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
3 THE FOUNTAIN
4 300

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 THE HITCHER
2 300
3 PRIMEVAL
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 300

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 300
2 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS
3 PRIMEVAL
4 YOU GOT ME
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 300
2 FLUSHED AWAY
3 YOU GOT ME
4 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 MUSIC AND LYRICS
2 RESERVED
3 300
4 YOU GOT ME
5 GHOST RIDER
6 PRIMEVAL
7 RESERVED
8 FLUSHED AWAY

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 GHOST RIDER
2 300
3 THE HITCHER
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
5 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS
6 THE RETURN
7 YOU GOT ME
8 PRIMEVAL

SM BACOLOD
NOW OPEN
1 YOU GOT ME
2 300
3 PRIMEVAL
4 THE MESENGER

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

SHOWTIME
EVENT CALENDAR

March 31 · 8:30pm THE CENTERSTAGE SM South Mall Cinema 3
April 14 · 8:30pm THE CENTERSTAGE SM MALL OF ASIA
April 20 · 8:30pm THE CENTERSTAGE SM Megamall Cinema 9

Tickets at P500 · P800
(exclusive of 5% ticketron charge)
RESERVED SEATS ON ALL SECTIONS

Tickets Available at National Book Store TICKETWORLD 891-5610 / 891-9999

*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

ROUNDUP

Piracy drive

THE OPTICAL MEDIA BOARD (OMB) has reported the confiscation of P447.80 million worth of illegal and pirated optical discs, machineries and equipment used in the unlawful replication of films, music and games.

OMB chairman and chief executive Edu B. Manzano made the disclosure in the agency's annual report covering the period February 2006 to February 2007.

Manzano said the seizures were a result from 1,034 raids, search warrant operations and plant inspections conducted by the OMB Inspection and Intelligence Department.

Romantic comedy

In "Just Like Heaven," a romantic comedy based on Mark Levy's book "If Only It Were True," landscape architect David Abbot (Mark Ruffalo) wishes to start a new life after losing his wife.

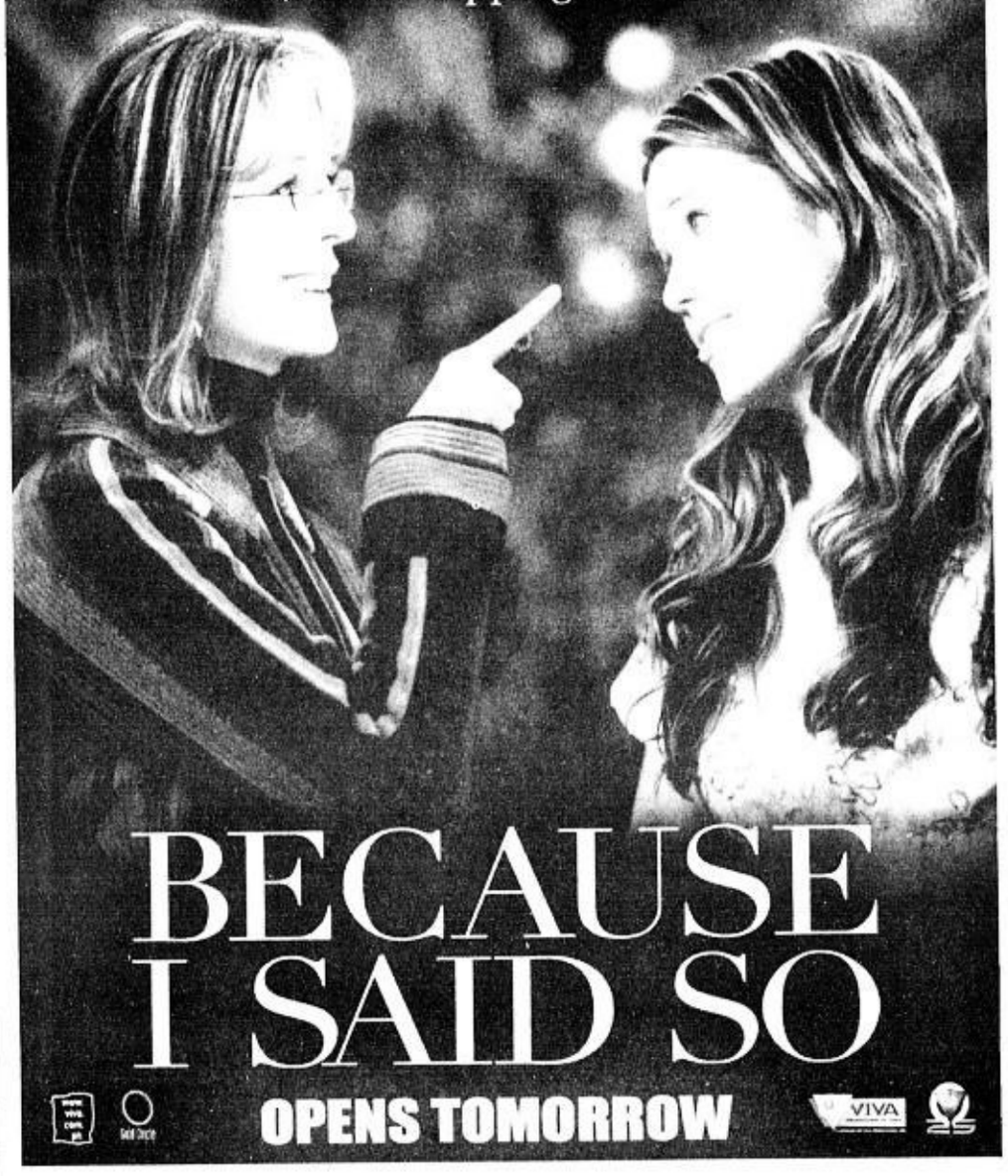
While busy vegetating in his new apartment, blond control freak Elizabeth (Reese Witherspoon) suddenly shows up and claims that the apartment is hers. What Elizabeth doesn't realize is that she was involved in a tragic accident three months ago, which left her with no recollection of her past.

"JUST Like Heaven"

The movie airs on March 24, 9 p.m. on HBO.

MTRCB RATING PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.

DIANE KEATON MANDY MOORE
Her mom shops for her food.
Shops for her clothes.
Now, she's shopping for her date.



BECAUSE I SAID SO
OPENS TOMORROW
VIVA

Digital film screening

Cinema One Originals' award-winning digital movie, "Huling Balyan ng Buhi," is set to be screened in the 31st Hong Kong International Film Festival's Asian Digital Competition category on March 27 to April 11.

It will also compete in the 20th Singapore International Film Festival on April 18 to 30.

Directed by 22-year-old Sherad Anthony Sanchez, the film from Mindanao combines science and logic, tradition and cultural differences.

It features Marilyn Roque and the people of Arakan Valley, North Cotabato.

Video games probe

Discovery Channel explores the history and art of gaming in the original premiere series, "I, Videogame."

Featuring interviews with giants in the gaming industry, the five-part series examines the evolution of the video game and its cultural impact on the world of entertainment today.

Beginning March 16, the episodes air every Friday at 7 p.m.

Summer plugs

GMA-7 will be giving away P50,000 to lucky viewers watching the SUMaMER KA NA! plugs.

At least a dozen lucky viewers have already won by just watching the network's entertainment programs.

Viewers earn raffle entries by texting the names of Kapuso artists included in the plugs to 367 for Smart subscribers and 4627 for Globe and Sun cellular subscribers.

"HOW I Met Your Mother"

Comedy series

"How I Met Your Mother," a comedy, revolves around Ted (Josh Radnor) and his quest for love.

His journey begins when his best friend, Marshall (Jason Segal), tells him that he's popping the big question to his longtime girlfriend, Lily (Alyson Hannigan), a kindergarten teacher.

Wanting to get serious in his relationship as well, he asks for the help of Barney (Neil Patrick Harris), a friend with endless and sometimes outrageous opinions on ways to meet women.

The show airs every Monday, 8:30 to 9 p.m. on ETC.

OPENS MARCH 21

HOW DO YOU SAVE SOMEONE WHO IS ALREADY DEAD?

SANDRA BULLOCK
PREMONITION

DID YOU KNOW...

No to Dylan

VATICAN CITY—POPE BENEDICT WAS OPPOSED to Bob Dylan appearing at a youth event with the late Pope John Paul in 1997 because he considered the pop star the wrong kind of "prophet," Benedict writes in a new book issued on Thursday. *Reuters*

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

THE GOOD SHEPHERD R13 12:45,4:00,7:15,10:30	HITCHER R13 2:00,4:00	300 R13 1:40,4:10,6:40,9:10
PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS G 2:45,5:15,7:45,10:15	300 R13 2:20,4:50,7:20,9:50	300 R13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE - FOR VERIFICATION CALL 896-1440/41
MATINNEE 110.00 FREE SEATING SCREENING BEFORE 5:00P.M. – MONDAY-FRIDAY

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 300 MTRCB R-13 1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS MTRCB GP 1:55, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00
3 GOOD SHEPHERD MTRCB R-13 12.05, 3:20, 6:40, 10:00
4 MUSIC AND LYRICS (PG-13) 12:55, 5:25, 10:00 THE HITCHER MTRCB R-13 3:15, 7:45
PREMIERE THEATRE — TEMPORARILY CLOSED
Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice
Catch the Cineplex Special
A Blockbuster Gift for all Season
The Shang Cineplex Gift Certificates
Treat your family and friends to a thrilling movie experience only at the shang.
Cinema Treats- for Cinemas 1, 2, 3, and 4
Premiere Rewards- for the Premiere Theatre
5th floor, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
EDSA corner Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City
Call 633-7851, loc. 171/ 170 or 633-2227 for more details.
Shangri-La Plaza

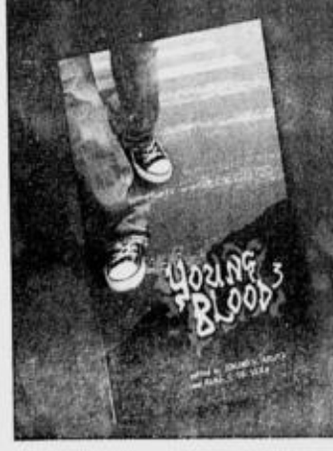
GREENHILLS CINEMAS
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA
THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS — a landmark reinvented!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 1: 300 10:30, 1:20, 4:10, 7:00, 9:50 R-13
CINEMA 2: THE HITCHER 11:40, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 8:25, 10:35 R-13
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
PROMENADE GREENHILLS — ...a diversitainment for all!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3: THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS 11:15, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00 PG-13
CINEMA 4: A GOOD SHEPHERD 11:50, 3:20, 6:45, 10:10 R-13
CINEMA 5: 300 11:10, 2:00, 4:50, 7:40, 10:30 R-13
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.
MUSIC MUSEUM

March 16 & 23, 2007	SITTI ... IN LOVE	8:30 PM
March 30, 2007	TABANG - PILITA C. SEC. JOEY LINA SEC. ANGIE REYES - CHAIRMAN BAYANI F.	8:30 PM
May 25, 2007	CHRISTIAN BAUTISTA	8:00 PM

T·E·A·T·R·I·N·O PROMENADE GREENHILLS

EVERY MONDAY March 15, 22, 29, 2007	DANCE NIGHT RAYMUND LAUCHENGCO	7:00 PM 8:30 PM

FOR INQUIRIES PLS. CALL 722-4532 LOC 116

THE BLOOD IS BACK.


The long wait is over as the hottest local anthology returns. Youngblood³ is in the house, loaded with the best essays from 1999 to 2004 in the most concentrated Youngblood package yet. Bear witness as a generation continues its evolution. This is the Filipino youth at their most honest and most eloquent. Here are the essays that matter from the newspaper that started it all. Youngblood³ is the young Filipino—unplugged.
Featuring essays by:
Jules Alcantara / Rain Reyes / Jose Leo Lemuel G.Caparas Jr. / Cinnamon Marcelo / Rodney L. Barayuga / Rio Cobcobo / Prairie Dawn / Ron Darvin / Agnes Fidelis C. Gloria-Pinzon / Elaine P.Lim / Purple / Ann Aberin / Squire / Alex Avila / Fitz Gerard Villafuerte / Windi Remmi Mondiguing Tapawan / Pearisha Abubakar / Biagko / Lou Albano / Angelo Hernandez / Claudette M. Llarena / Connie Gundayao / Maria del Rosario / Karen Mae V.Gican / B / Jerick T. Aguilar / Malou I. Redome / Jen Esguerra / Erin Batac / Ella Reyes / Eder S. Mutuc, M.D. / Donalyne Rosalan Lampa / Carlos Alfonso Q. Santos / Christela Cabreros / Adello Cyrus Alanis / Aleja F. Martinez / Zvach / Matthias / Raiza Katrina Abubakar / Jessica Brillantes / Gabriella S. Martelino / Sherie S. Sta. Cruz / Janie S. Cambri / Jonas Soltes / Jael Wenceslao / Paolo L. Azurin / Diana Emlano / Kay Stephanie Veloso / TJ / Dawn Isobel Yu Aquino / Roel A. Andag / Paolo David / Florianne Jimenez
YOUNGBLOOD
Edited by Jorge V. Aruta and Ruel S. De Vera
P395 bookpaper P150 newsprint
Now available from National Book Store and PowerBooks.
Co-published by
and INQUIRER books

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 300
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 GOOD SHEPHERD
4 MUSIC & LYRICS / THE HITCHER
PREMIERE — TEMPORARILY CLOSED

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 300
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

STARMALL
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7268150
3 300
4 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
5 RESRVED

METROPOLIS STAR CINEMA
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994
1 YOU GOT ME
2 DEAD PEOPLE-2
3 300
4 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

THEATRES
GHOST RIDER
YOU GOT ME
NUMBER 23

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
YOU GOT ME
GHOST RIDER
RESRVED
RESRVED

FILINVEST FESTIVAL CINEMAS
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 THE HITCHER
2 PRIMEVAL
3 300
4 300
5 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
6 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
7 GHOST RIDER
8 DEAD PEOPLE-2
9 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
10 YOU GOT ME

BLUE WAVE
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 YOU GOT ME
2 300
3 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
4 RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 300
3 YOU GOT ME
4 DEAD PEOPLE-2
5 GHOST RIDER

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 PRIMEVAL
2 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
3 NUMBER 23
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 YOU GOT ME
2 THE HITCHER
3 EPIC MOVIE

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 300
2 THE FOUNTAIN

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 300
2 YOU GOT ME
3 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
4 PRIMEVAL

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 GHOST RIDER
2 YOU GOT ME

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodreguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.0963 or 72
1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 300
3 THE HITCHER
4 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 YOU GOT ME
3 300
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 APOCALYPTO
2 YOU GOT ME
3 GHOST RIDER

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 YOU GOT ME
2 HANNIVAL RISING
3 GHOST RIDER
4 THE FOUNTAIN

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Pfandel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 YOU GOT ME

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 GHOST RIDER
2 YOU GOT ME

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 YOU GOT ME
2 PRIMEVAL

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 DEAD PEOPLE-2
2 BED TIME
3 HULING BERHEN SA LUPA
4 NUMBER 23

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 300
2 PEEP SHOW
3 YOU GOT ME
4 SUGAT WALANG PAGHILUM
5 PURSUIT OF HAPYNESS

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 THE FOUNTAIN
2 NUMBER 23
3 PRIMEVAL
4 YOU GOT ME

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 TROIKA
2 NUMBER 23

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE

CINEMA ACCESS
635-5555
FOR ALL BRANCHES
www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

GALLERIA
Ticket Price THX: P161 131 Indie Sine: 101 632-9116

1 A GOOD SHEPHERD • THX
12:00 3:20 6:40 10:00

2 300
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

3 THE HITCHER
1:25 3:30 5:35 7:40 9:50

4 DEAD PEOPLE 2
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

5 Reserved for VICTORY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

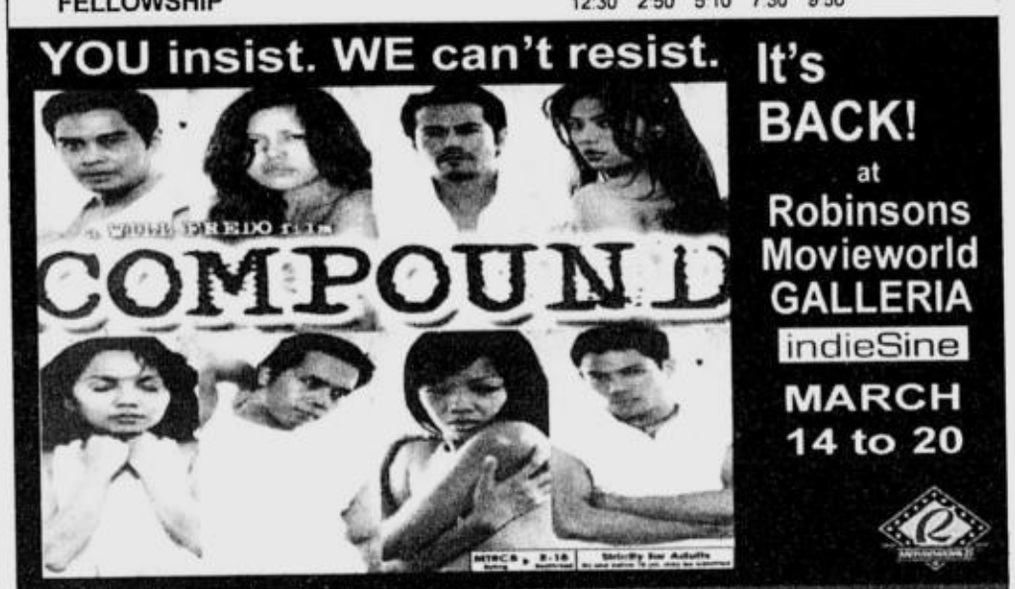
6 Reserved for VICTORY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

7 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

8 indieSine: ROME and JULIET
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

9 THE PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

10 YOU GOT ME
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50



ERMITA
Ticket Price: P110 536-7809 to 12

1 300
12:35 3:00 5:25 7:45 10:00

2 IT's A BOY GIRL THING 12:05 2:00 3:55
PRIMEVAL 6:00 8:00 10:00

3 A GOOD SHEPHERD
11:30 3:00 6:30 10:00

4 YOU GOT ME
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

5 THE HITCHER
12:35 2:50 5:05 7:30 10:00

6 DEAD PEOPLE 2
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00

7 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

METRO EAST
Ticket Price: P100 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 THE NUMBER 23 12:50 2:50
BRIDGE of TERABITHIA 4:50 6:50 9:00

2 300
12:55 3:40 6:25 9:10

3 YOU GOT ME
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

4 THE HITCHER
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

5 PRIMEVAL 12:30 2:40
GHOST RIDER 4:50 7:00 9:00

6 A GOOD SHEPHERD
11:00 2:10 5:30 9:00

7 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00

8 DEAD PEOPLE 2
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

NOVALICHES
Ticket Price: P91 / P96 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 300
2 YOU GOT ME
3 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
4 THE HITCHER

PIONEER
Ticket Price: P100 687-6378

1 A GOOD SHEPHERD
1:40 5:00 8:20

2 300
1:15 3:45 6:15 8:40

3 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
1:15 3:45 6:15 8:40

4 THE HITCHER
12:25 2:30 4:35 6:40 8:40

STA. ROSA
Ticket Price: P80 (049) 837-0907

1 300
2 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
3 THE CLEANER
4 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
5 YOU GOT ME

LIPA
Ticket Price: (043) 757-3664 P 90 (043) 312-5870

1 GHOST RIDER
2 YOU GOT ME
3 THE NUMBER 23
4 THE FOUNTAIN
5 PRIMEVAL

DASMARIÑAS
Ticket Price: P80 (046) 416-4332

1 FLUSHED AWAY
2 300
3 YOU GOT ME
4 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS

ANGELES
Ticket Price: P 90 (045) 892-2348

1 300
2 YOU GOT ME
3 FLUSHED AWAY
4 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS

IMUS
Ticket Price: P100 (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 300
2 PRIMEVAL
3 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
4 YOU GOT ME
5 FLUSHED AWAY

STARMILLS
Ticket Price: P80 (045) 875-1927

1 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
2 TROIKA
3 YOU GOT ME
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 300
6 PRIMEVAL

BACOLOD
Ticket Price: P70 (034) 441-0459

1 300
2 THE SPIRIT TRAP
3 YOU GOT ME
4 LITTLE CHILDREN
5 PRIMEVAL
6 THE MESSENGERS

ILOILO
Ticket Price: P70.50 (033) 336-8070

1 300
2 YOU GOT ME
3 HANNIBAL RISING
4 PRIMEVAL
5 TROIKA
6 FLUSHED AWAY

NOW SHOWING at Robinsons Movieworld ILOILO

Passion has decamped the matrimonial bed of a Filipino mining engineer and his exotic young wife who left Faridabad, India to live with him in Manila. The 'seven year itch' strikes when he is tapped to supervise a gold mining operation up north in Benguet, leaving her alone to care for their 6 years old son. She soon follows her husband to Baguio City and brings her son with her. In the subterranean setting of the mining site, the engineer has found a homoerotic world of sweaty, swarthy half-naked men. He has shared his lodgings with a young virile miner of ethnic Ibaloi ancestry, putting his repressed homosexuality to a serious test. But the unexpected arrival of his wife confounds the situation. Instantly, passion ignites between her and the miner. Curiously, the engineer seems to approve.

MTRCB Rating: R18

GARFIELD

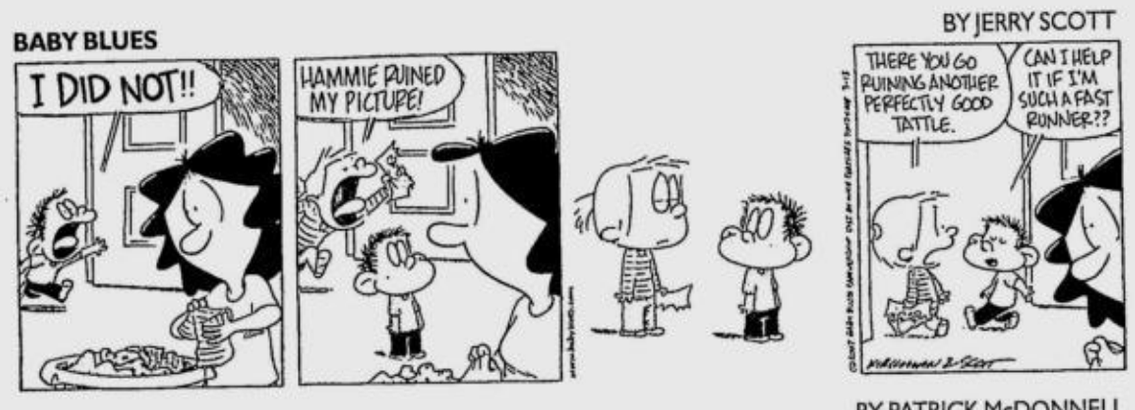
BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT



PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL

LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

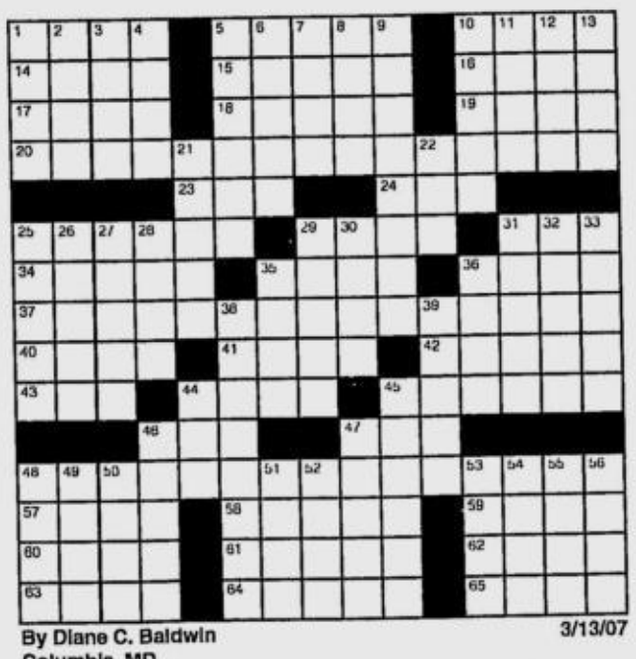
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Nuisance
5 Adds seasoning
10 Falling-out
14 Be sore
15 Kilt fold
16 Grease job
17 Oxford or brogue
18 Swiftly
19 Smelter fodder
20 Indescribable
23 Brewed drink
24 Sitter's creation
25 Break in the action
29 Mix
31 Poppycock!
34 Ethical Culture Movement's founder
35 Knock for a loop
36 Ditto
37 The less said the better
40 "The Wind in the Willows" critter
41 Standing
42 "__ It Black"
43 Irving or Tan
44 Egg's center
45 Fairly recent
46 Jiffy
47 Knight's address
48 Beyond expressing
57 __-friendly
58 Slur over
59 Field measure
60 Refinery residue
61 Religious doctrine
62 Beach toy
63 Rosy anticipation
64 Run-down
65 Lose it

DOWN
1 Long ago
2 Canyon rerun
3 Bug off!
4 Abound
5 Blank spots
6 Dominant male
7 Table extension
8 Tex-Mex treat
9 Silver grade
10 Single-masted ship
11 Feline rumble
12 All tucked in
13 Hardy heroine
21 180-degree maneuver
22 Word with cry or chest
25 "__ la vista, baby!"
26 Figurative phrase
27 Set to rest
28 __ off (angry)
29 Awful smell
30 Rhino's weapon
31 Wheel spokes
32 Signs of what's to come
33 Tithing amount
35 Close securely
36 Take-out side
38 Does some hooked needlework
39 Met production
44 Up to now
45 Refinement
46 Suit material
47 Was partisan
48 Cornmeal dish
49 Capital by a fjord
50 Gather grain
51 Nautical direction
52 Blissful cloud
53 Rest periods
54 Thumb through
55 Song from an opera
56 High-pitched cry



By Diane C. Baldwin
Columbia, MD

3/13/07

Monday's Puzzle Solved

P	R	O		N	A	F	T	A		B	A	C	K	S
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O	D	E	S			S	K	I	E	S		G	E	L
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S	H	O	O	T	F	R	O	M	T	H	E	H	I	P
P	E	N	N	E		C	R	O	W	E		E	R	E
A	R	E	A	S		H	O	N	O	R		R	E	D

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3/13/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You often feel that fate plays a role in your life. You have your own special brand of courage, which is why you are able to surmount major obstacles if they occur. Personal growth is important to you. You intend to become a better person in this lifetime. In the year ahead, you'll have an opportunity to study and learn something valuable. **Birthdate of:** Dana Delany, actress; Danny Masterson, actor; William H. Macy, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): A boss, parent or authority figure in your life might give you a little surprise today. New avenues about how to explore your future in a different, exciting way now exist.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Try to do something different today. Break away from your daily routine. You want to learn something new and exciting. You want some adventure in your life!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Unexpected gifts and goodies might fall in your lap today. In some fashion, the wealth of others will benefit you. (Just say thank you.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Existing friends could surprise you today, or, alternatively, you might meet someone bizarre and unorthodox who is quite different from you. (It's not a boring day.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Be ready for a few surprises at work today. The introduction of new technology, new staff or even new, improved ways of doing your work will shake things up a bit. (It's a whole new world.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): New flirtations and playful opportunities to enjoy yourself exist today. Just go with the flow. The theme for today is simply to have a good time.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Unexpected company might drop by at home, or expected company might be a no-show. Something unpredictable and, hopefully, pleasant will occur at home or within your family.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You might meet new people today, or casual acquaintances or even siblings and relatives might surprise you in some way. Be ready to learn something new that broadens your mind.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might come up with a new moneymaking idea today. You might also make spontaneous purchases related to electronics or technology that please you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): The Moon is in your sign today, doing a quick dance with unpredictable Uranus. This makes you feel independent, excited and ready for anything. You might meet a new friend.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Don't worry about restless feelings that tug at you today. They're here today, but they'll be gone tomorrow. Relax. Research into something could reveal surprising secrets.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): A friend might surprise you by saying or doing something bizarre. Or perhaps you'll just meet someone today who is very different from you.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

9	4	5			7			1
	1						2	3
					9			4
8		2		4				
			1		8			
				6		8		9
1			7					
6	8						5	
5			6			2	4	8

Difficulty Level ★★

3/13

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

6	5	9	2	8	4	1	7	3
2	8	3	1	6	7	4	5	9
4	1	7	3	9	5	2	8	6
1	3	8	5	7	2	6	9	4
5	9	6	4	3	8	7	1	2
7	4	2	9	1	6	5	3	8
3	6	4	7	5	9	8	2	1
9	2	5	8	4	1	3	6	7
8	7	1	6	2	3	9	4	5

Difficulty Level ★

3/12

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Best musical performer, yes; best supporting actress, no

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

AFTER PREVIEWING "DREAMGIRLS," WE APpreciated **Jennifer Hudson**'s musical performance as Effie White, but we did not feel that she deserved to win the Best Supporting Actress Oscar.

The problem was not her thespic gift, but the movie's predictably melodramatic development. To our mind, this limited the depth, range and significance of Hudson's portrayal.

In the film, Hudson's character was the best singer but also the most undisciplined member of the new singing trio, the Dreamettes. When the group's manager (played by **Jamie Foxx**) decided to transfer the solo singing to another member (**Beyonce Knowles**), Effie felt betrayed and walked out of the trio.

Unknown to the others, she was pregnant with Foxx's child, and she gave birth to her daughter in dire penury. As the Dreamettes became the Dreams and went from one hit to another, Effie languished in poverty, and her child grew up without a father.

In time, Effie was able to get over her monumental hurt and revive her singing career, this time as a soloist. She kissed and made up with her former group mates, but she never told Foxx about their daughter. He had to learn about her by himself at the movie's final fade.

All in all, the film does put Effie's character through the emotional wringer, and that's the stuff "awardable" performances are made of.

In addition, Effie's songs in the film are so vocally and emotionally demanding that they add to Hudson's overall achievement as a total performer. Indeed, Hudson's supporting role is even more demanding and challenging than lead player Knowles' less tormented character.

But many of Effie's woes were developed and expressed in melodramatic rather than significantly dramatic terms, so their genuine impact was blunted.

Difference

What's the difference between drama and melodrama? In truly dramatic situations, the stresses that a character is subjected to affect him or her to the very core of his or her being, even beyond tears and loud protestations, and result in a significant character change that leads to the revelation of who that person really is.

In melodrama, the focus is on the emotions generated by the stresses the character is put through. Thus, Hudson's Effie screams, lashes out and breaks down, but little else that's significant happens to her.

Similarly, her vocal performance is musically amazing and lushly felt, but after each song is over, insufficient character change and insight are produced.

As we've said, the "fault" lies not so much in Hudson, but in the movie's makers, who have opted to keep it on the level of melodrama, possibly for easier accessibility and populist effect.

In popular terms, that works in Hudson's favor. When it comes to awards, however, her performance is found wanting.

So, why did she win? Once more, the Academy Awards reveal their populist rather than rigorously artistic bent, to the disadvantage of other Best Supporting Actress nominees like **Judi Dench** and **Abigail Breslin**.

'Beerfest'

From the Broken Lizard comedy group comes the raucous comedy, "Beerfest," on DVD in both theatrical and unrated versions. Both versions contain over 75 minutes of outrageous extras, including a Party Foul featurette that reveals the most egregious mishaps on the set.

'Wild Hogs'

Don't look now, but "Wild Hogs" is a certified hit at the tills. The rollicking comedy stars **Tim Allen**, **John Allen**, **John Travolta**, **Martin Lawrence** and **William H. Macy** as weekend-warrior friends who rev up their boring suburban lives with one last motorcycle trip!

But they find themselves in an unwitting rivalry with a real-life, bad-ass biker gang.

The weekend warriors later discover that heading down the road to nowhere can take you to places you never expected.

LATE FOR THE PARTY
US pop star Michael Jackson waves to fans at a heliport south of Tokyo. He was late for a party where Japanese followers paid $3,500 for a meet-and-greet with him on Thursday. AFP

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1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
12:40, 3:10, 5:50, 8:30, 11:00
G

2 300
12:15, 2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:10
R-13

3 THE HITCHER
1:55, 4:10, 6:25, 8:40, 10:55
R-13

4 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
1:30, 4:50, 8:10, 11:20
R-13

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EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE

300 12:40 / 2:20 / 3:10 / 4:50 / 5:40 / 7:20 / 8:10 / 9:50
THE GOOD SHEPHERD 2:10 / 5:35 / 9:00
PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS 1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:50
THE HITCHER 12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10
DEAD PEOPLE 2 1:30 / 3:30 / 5:30 / 7:30 / 9:30
GHOST RIDER 7:15 / 9:40
YOU GOT ME 12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30
MUSIC & LYRICS 5:25 / 9:45
IT'S A BOY GIRL THING 1:05 / 3:15 / 7:35
300 1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00

MALL 5
1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS 12:20 / 3:00 / 5:40 / 8:20
2 THE GOOD SHEPHERD 1:10 / 4:35 / 8:00
3 300 12:50 / 3:20 / 5:50 / 8:20
4 DEAD PEOPLE 2 12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:30
5 YOU GOT ME 12:00 / 1:35 / 3:50 / 6:05 / 8:20
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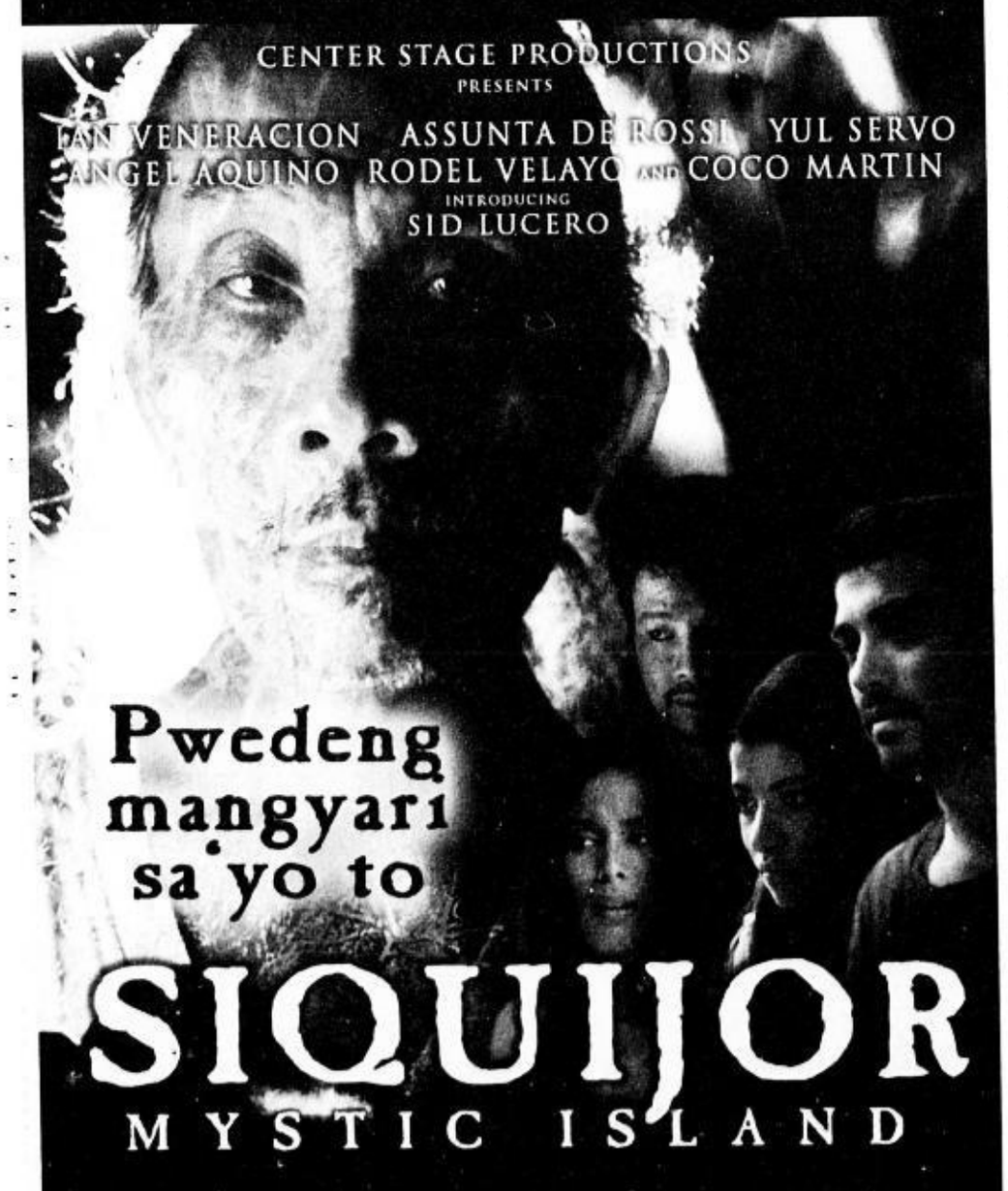

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SHAINA MAGDAYAO RAYVER CRUZ

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Rock without screaming vocals

BAMBOO

By Pocholo Concepcion
Contributor

REVIEW

TO HEAR THE NEWS THAT BAMBOO has recorded an all-cover CD for its third album is to wonder if this intensely creative young band has lost steam.

Could it be exhaustion from the gigs and tours that followed the consecutive successes of its 2004 debut, "As the Music Plays," and its 2005 follow-up, "LightPeaceLove"? Or could it be biding its time to recharge—the perfect way to write new songs?

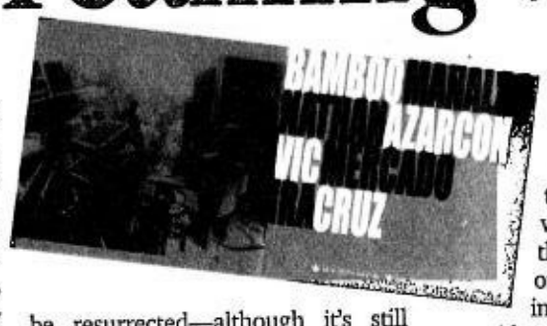
If so, the release of the all-cover set, "We Stand Alone Together," might be seen as a marketing strategy to sustain fans' interest, at least for the rest of the year.

Press blurbs issued by EMI Philippines quote vocalist Bamboo Mañalac as saying, "When we started recording the first album, we already planned to do something like this...sort of a footnote." (Those who bought the first CD's special edition would notice the inclusion of at least three covers, including The Doors' "Break On Through" and Bob Marley's "Waiting in Vain.")

In any case, "We Stand Alone Together" should give clues on what the band has been tripping on—most probably after hours, in a relaxed or experimental mood.

There are eight tracks here—a sprinkling of 1970s classic rock from Dave Mason ("Feelin' Alright"), Carole King ("So Far Away") and Paul Simon ("Fifty Ways To Leave Your Lover"); a couple of not-too-old material from Pearl Jam ("Alive") and Seal ("Prayer For the Dying"); an OPM standard popularized by Tillie Moreno and Ray-An Fuentes and written by Felipe Monserrat, Jr. ("Umagang Kay Ganda"); a Pinoy rock chestnut from Anak Bayan ("Probinsyana"); and an underground gem from the alternative group Buklod ("Tatsulok").

Intriguing is the effect of hearing "Tatsulok" on the streets when radio first played it a month ago. The protest folk song written for victims of social unrest in the Philippines made Buklod's Rom Dongeto and Noel Cabangon a popular alternative act in the early '90s. Nobody expected it to be resurrected—although it's still eerily relevant today.



In Bamboo's version, guitarist Ira Cara Cruz lends a tormented mood to Mañalac's frail but indignant vocals. This song alone makes the CD a collector's item.

Fascination

The rest of the tracks reveal Bamboo's fascination with melding rock with jazz. Credited as session musicians are jazz pianists Ria Villena-Osorio and Wowie Posadas, whose keyboard calisthenics are well appreciated—in what song specifically, the CD sleeves fail to mention.

But their contributions are apparent—in the way "Probinsyana," for instance, achieves a lilting strut in its groove. The sound of a horn section sure feels authentic, even if most likely it's just keyboard-manipulated. In this song, Bamboo not only pays tribute to one of Pinoy rock's founding fathers (Anak Bayan drummer/songwriter Edmund Fortuno, missing in the credits); it also reaffirms what the original version wished to exalt: the innocence and purity of our countryside women.

Similarly, "Feelin' Alright," "So Far Away" and "Fifty Ways" are reworked with refreshing results—the piano playing effusive with an energy that eggs on the band to fuse elements that separate musical forms.

But Bamboo messing around with a pop ballad like "Umagang Kay Ganda" ends on a disappointing note. It sounds like filler material and should've been left out.

But notable are two unlisted bonus tracks—an outtake from "Feelin' Alright" with what sounds like real sax and trumpet players, and Bamboo recorded live at the club 19 East in Sucat, Parañaque, jamming with Posadas in Sting's "Englishman in New York." Here the band seems to be in its element—Cruz and drummer Vic Mercado shine through in a display of improvisational skills.

In a separate disc are more bonus tracks, a mixed bag of 15 numbers from the previous and present CDs, giving listeners an idea of how Bamboo would sound without Cruz's guitar, Azarcon's bass and Mercado's drums. Frankly, it seems like an excessive exercise, and the only point it might achieve is to discourage sale of any pirated version of the CD.

All told, the best thing Bamboo has done this time around is educate its followers: Rock is more than screaming vocals and loud guitars.

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G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	2 THE GOOD SHEPHERD	3 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 NOTES ON A SCANDAL	5 LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA	6 300	7 YOU GOT ME
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS		2 300	
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS		2 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	3 NOTES ON A SCANDAL GUARANTEED SEATS	4 THE GOOD SHEPHERD GUARANTEED SEATS	5 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS		2 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	
	3 THE HITCHER	4 YOU GOT ME	5 THE GOOD SHEPHERD	
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M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 300		2 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	
	3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD	4 THE HITCHER	5 YOU GOT ME	

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ACROSS / A23

Scam on Cebu lampposts at P300,000 each for Asean summit grows bigger

NEWS / A12

Hostage drama in Taguig: 2 court employees, complainant and lawyer held by ex-Marine

NEWS / A2

PNP-AFP sends team to US Congress hearings on RP political killings

NEWS / A7

Supreme Court remands Liberal Party row to Comelec

Copy of serial nos. said to duplicate poll forms

By Norman Bordadora

THE COPYING OF SERIAL NUMBERS OF election forms raises not only the possibility of election fraud but also huge security concerns, two well-placed sources warned yesterday.

According to one source, who has had long experience with the procedures of the Commission on Elections and the National Printing Office in

COPY/ A13

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, March 14, 2007 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 96 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Maguindanao governor modern-day Godfather

SHARIFF AGUAK, Maguindanao—He doesn't wear a bejeweled turban or sport a ceremonial kris, but Andal Ampatuan is as much a sultan as any.

You could walk past him without a second

MAGUINDANAO/ A13

RP 'most corrupt' in Asia

CBCP junks Bro. Mike's call to name candidates

By Nikko Dizon

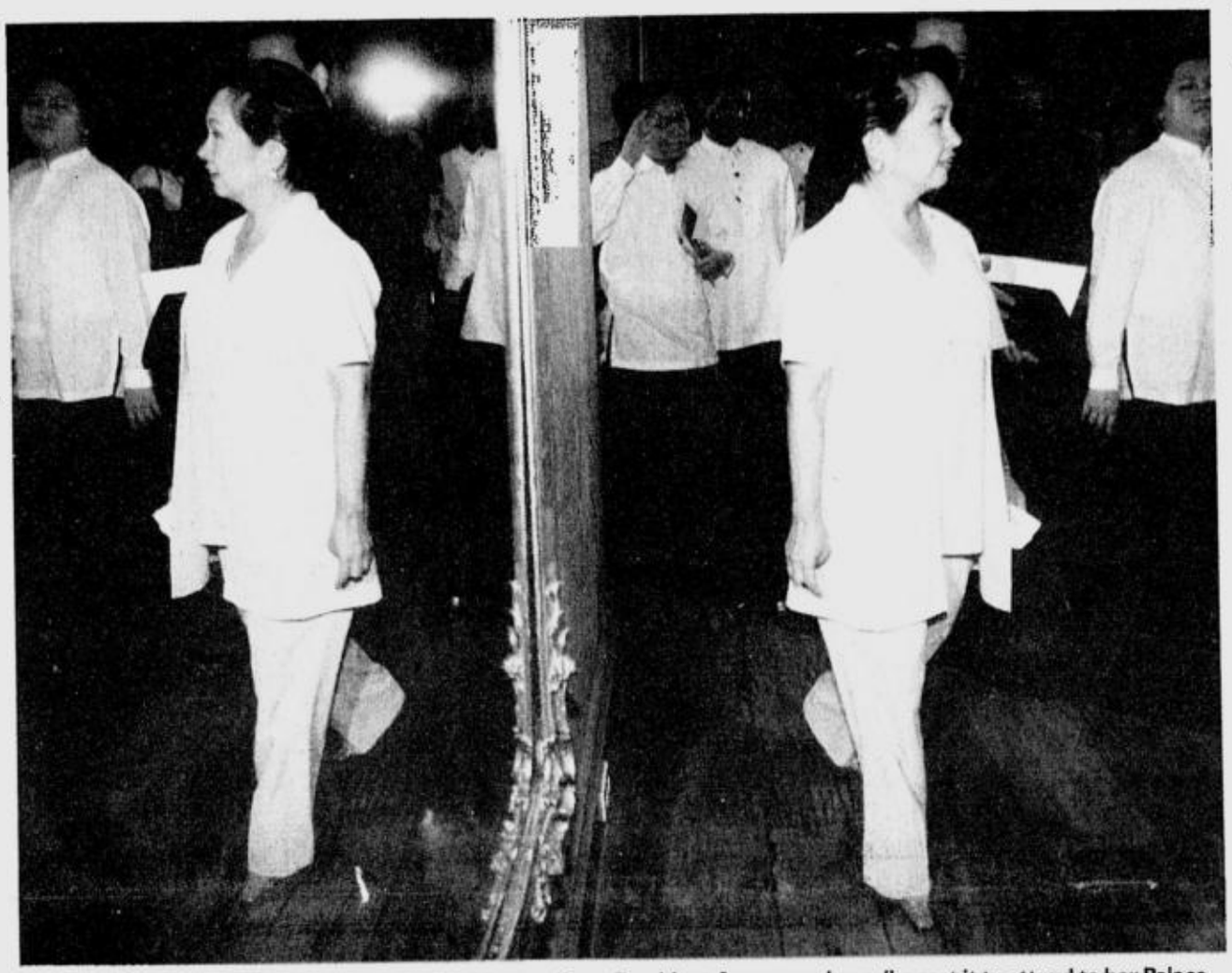
THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONference of the Philippines (CBCP) yesterday rejected El Shaddai spiritual leader Mike Velarde's call for the Church to provide a short list of senatorial candidates for its flock to choose from in the May 14 midterm elections.

"To dictate on them whom to vote for is as bad as buying their votes," CBCP president Angel Lagdameo said in a one-page statement.

"CBCP does not want the candidates to be indebted to the bishops," said Lagdameo, the archbishop of Iloilo. "Instead, we want the candidates to make a genuine covenant with the electorate: That if elected, they will serve the people and not themselves."

The INQUIRER, however, has learned that already at least five bishops have been quietly campaigning for the three senatorial aspirants of Ang Kapatiran, a Catholic

CBCP/ A10



DOUBLE EXPOSURE: Gilded mirror in Malacañang reflects President Arroyo as she walks past it to attend to her Palace appointments for the day. LYN RILLON

PERC: It's bad and has been bad all along

By Cyril L. Bonabente, *PDI Research* and Agence France Presse

DESPITE THE MUCH-PUBLICIZED efforts by the Arroyo administration to curb corruption, foreign businessmen perceive the Philippines to be the most corrupt economy among 13 countries and territories across Asia.

The Philippines replaced Indonesia as the country with "the distinction of being perceived in the worst light this year," the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy said yesterday in a summary of its survey that was made available to Agence France Presse (AFP).

PERC, which provides advice to private firms and governments, polled 1,476 expatriate businessmen in the region in January and February. Of the total, more than 100 were based in the Philippines.

The survey also found some countries were failing properly to tackle corruption.

In a grading system with zero as the best possible score and 10 the worst, the Philippines got 9.40, worsening sharply from its grade of 7.80 last year. Indonesia had been deemed Asia's most corrupt

RP/ A20

Pregnant women can't be fired—SC

By Leila B. Salaverria

A WOMAN CANNOT BE FIRED from her job because she is pregnant, according to the Supreme Court.

In a ruling promulgated on March 6, the high court dismissed a petition of Del Monte Philippines Inc. questioning an order that the company reinstate and award back wages to an employee it had illegally terminated.

The tribunal affirmed earlier rulings by the Court of Appeals and the National Labor Relations Commission that field worker Lolita Velasco was terminated because of her pregnancy—a violation of the Labor Code—and had to be given her old job back, including back wages.

It said it was "convinced" that Del Monte had terminated Velas-

PREGNANT/ A10

GMA blames 'opposition,' her unpopularity for negative image

By Juliet Labog-Javellana, Daxim L. Lucas and Ronnel W. Domingo

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO yesterday dismissed a survey that found the Philippines to be the most corrupt economy in Asia, saying the perceptions were based on old data gathered from newspapers.

"(T)he credit ratings are fine. It's the political analysis (that is unfair)," Ms Arroyo told BizNews Asia magazine when asked about the survey by the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC).

PERC said the survey conducted in January and February of 1,476 expatriate business executives in 13 countries and territories across the region rated Singapore and Hong Kong as the cleanest economies.

Ms Arroyo blamed "opposition people" in a foreign group monitoring corruption across the globe for the negative perception.

"If you look at the ones in Transparency International Philippines, they are made up of opposition people," Ms Arroyo said.

She said negative reports about the country were an offshoot of her being unpopular.

"I wouldn't say that there's no downside. Many of these, as I said, are because of my popularity but as I said it's a price worth paying," Ms Arroyo said.

She said she had made tough decisions to turn the economy around and these had made her unpopular.

"I remember (the passage of the expanded) VAT. I was very unpopular (because of that)," Ms Arroyo said. "I would rather have reform

GMA BLAMES/ A18

The Philippines is seen as the most corrupt economy in Asia, according to a survey by the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy group released on Tuesday.

DSWD: 1,387 donated tents for Bicol lying unused

By Jocelyn R. Uy

MORE THAN 300 DONATED tents are lying unused in local government offices instead of sheltering homeless victims of Supertyphoon "Reming" who are in cramped evacuation centers, the Department of Social Welfare and Development said yesterday.

Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral said that of the 1,387 tents that the agency delivered to Region V after "Reming" battered Bicolandia last November:

- 386 were still "under the custody" of local government units (155 in Albay and 231 in Camarines Sur).
- 175 family tents were missing or "still unaccounted for."
- 209 "pup tents," which could accommodate only two persons each, were still with the DSWD and could not be distributed because they were too small.
- 299 tents were being used by the 3,000 families in 18 evacuation centers as their villages had been declared as "no man's land."
- 318 units were outside holding areas and were sheltering individual families.

Much of the last batch of 500 tents which the agency had sent in early February had yet to be distributed to beneficiaries, Cabral told the INQUIRER. Of this figure 333 units, each good for one family of six, were being kept in the office of the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council of Albay.

"They (local officials) said they had other plans for the tents. They said they would be used in transit areas," Cabral said. "But I told them that if there was still a need for tents, which there is, they should distribute them now ... but I cannot demand, I can only encourage them."

Cabral witnessed how victims had to make do with flimsy shel-

DSWD/ A9

Villagers shield outgunned troops from NPA rebels

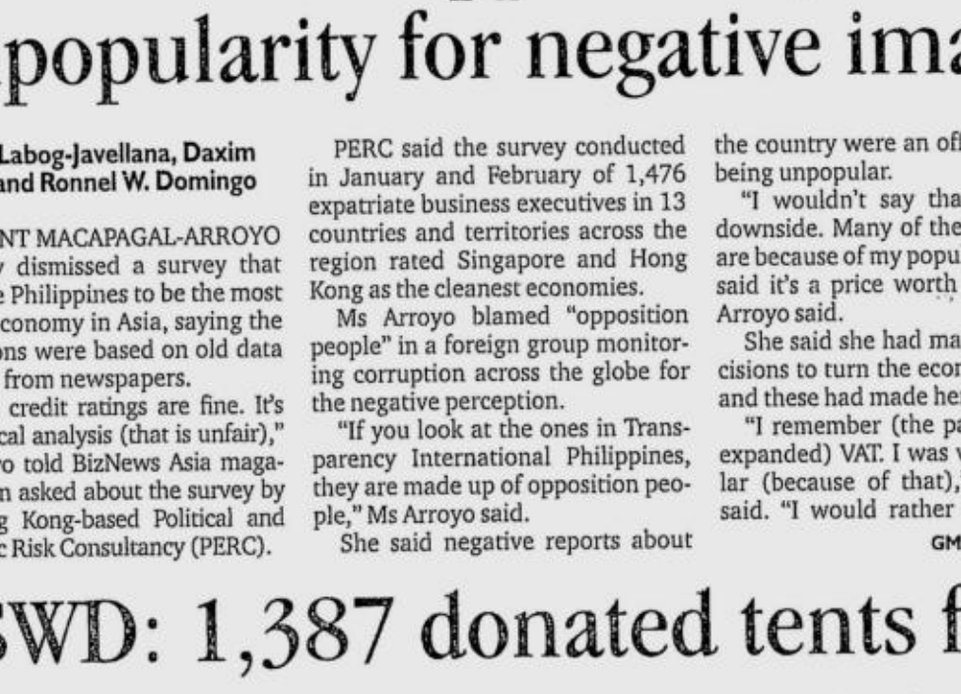
LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—UNARMED villagers in Abra province acted as human shields to prevent communist guerrillas from attacking heavily outnumbered troops, the military said yesterday.

The people of Danac West, outside the town of Boliney, threw a human shield around an Army patrol base after getting wind of an impending attack by about 40 New People's Army rebels, said regional military spokesperson Lt. Jose Ilarde.

Just three soldiers and nine members of a village militia force were manning the base at the time.

Village chief Loreto Bacuyag later told

VILLAGERS/ A10



WOMAN WITH A MISSION: Sandra Cam, "jueteng" whistle-blower who linked First Gentleman Mike Arroyo and Rep. Mikey Arroyo to paybacks from the illegal game, returns from the Mideast on Tuesday. She's met by Frank Chavez (left) and Buenaventura Miranda. JESS TUSON

Zuño to speed up probe of GMA 7 asset's killing

By Leila B. Salaverria and Edson C. Tandoc

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE yesterday pledged to fast-track its investigation of the case of a media "asset" killed while carrying a hidden camera in a big shabu market in Pasig City.

"I'll try to resolve it within the week," Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño said. "I'll expedite it."

The case involved the murder of German Colisao, who police said worked as an "asset" of the GMA 7 television network supposedly for its program, "Imbestigador."

An "asset" generally refers to someone hired for information-gathering work.

Pasig police chief Senior Supt. Francisco Uyami said solving Colisao's case was "very important."

"It is intertwined with the operation of the drug den. This shows that those behind it even killed people just to protect the illegal drug trade," Uyami told the INQUIRER.

Contacted last night, Viney Ibarra of the GMA legal department said: "We would like to clarify that German Colisao was not a paid asset of GMA."

Ibarra described Colisao as "a

ZUÑO/ A18

EZ2: 11 17 | SIX DIGIT: 3 5 7 6 7 2

SUERTRES Mid-Day: 9 6 7 | Evening: 3 8 9 (All in exact order)

6/42 LUZON/VIS-MIN: 17 18 23 36 38 39 — P19,716,532.20

Second FrontPage

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao and the Eastern section of Visayas will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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PNP-AFP team off to US for probe

By Alcuin Papa

A CONTINGENT OF PHILIPPINE security officers left for Washington D.C. yesterday to attend the US Congress hearings on extrajudicial killings in the country.

They were invited as observers by Philippine Ambassador to the United States Willy Gaa but they will not be called upon to testify. They will act as resource persons to Gaa.

Earlier, Gaa had asked the US Congress to include a special team of representatives from the Philippines to act as observers in the hearings.

He said the team would "assist the US authorities on any information needed for a fair, objective and honest inquiry."

As of yesterday, however, it was not clear if Gaa himself had been invited to testify in the US Congress hearings. All Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Claro Cristobal would say was that Gaa had been ordered by Malacañang "to make representations with the US Congress."

'Nothing to hide'

Deputy Director General Avelino Razon, Philippine National Police deputy chief for administration, said he would bring up the involvement of communist rebels in the killings.

Razon heads the contingent composed of Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) chief Director Edgardo Doromal and two representatives from the Armed Forces of the Philippines who were not identified.

Razon said they would report on the police investigation of the killings of militants and journalists in the country. Razon was former head of Task Force Usig, which was formed by the government to investigate the killings.

"This is an opportunity to explain to the (US) Senate. We have nothing to hide. We were open to United Nations Special Rapporteur Philip Alston. We will present the facts on the involvement of the New People's Army in the killings, as Task Force Usig found out in its investigation," Razon said.

Alston was in the country last month to investigate the killings. He had said the Philippine military was "in denial" over the killings blamed mostly on elements of the Armed Forces.

Rep. Tom Lantos (Democrat, Calif.), chair of the House foreign relations committee, will preside over a hearing on the killings at 10 a.m. on March 14, while Sen. Barbara Boxer (Democrat, Calif.), chair of the East Asia Sub-Committee of the Senate, will head an inquiry at 2:30 p.m. on the same day.

Lobbying by Filipino-American groups that included the United Methodist Church and the militant party-list group Partido ng Manggagawa brought the extrajudicial killings to the attention of the US Congress.

Malacañang has welcomed the probe and believed it would not strain RP-US relations, according to Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

Satur's representative

"We shall help the US and any other government distinguish fact from propaganda on this issue and bring the light of truth to the world," Bunye had said on Monday.

Not only the Philippine government but its opponents want to participate in the US Congress hearings.

Pending his surrender to Philippine authorities on murder charges later this week, leftist leader Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo is set to "participate" in the hearings.

Ocampo is currently in hiding from security forces hunting him down based on a warrant of arrest issued by a Leyte court in connection with a mass grave containing the remains of alleged New People's Army members that was discovered in Inopacan, Leyte, in August 2006. *With Christian V. Esguerra and Cynthia D. Balana*

Diplomatic protest sought

By Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—THE CHAIRMAN OF the House Committee on Foreign Affairs has asked the government to file a diplomatic protest over investigations by his counterpart US congressional committee into hundreds of political killings that ostensibly line the Arroyo administration's road to economic progress.

Cebu City south district representative Antonio Cuenco said the government should not allow the US Congress to conduct an investigation, as it is clearly "an invasion of our sovereignty and should be condemned."

"In behalf of my committee, we condemned this act by the US in interfering in our internal affairs, said Cuenco, a member of the ruling Lakas coalition.

Cuenco's counterpart in the US, Rep. Tom Lantos (Democrat, California), chair of the US House foreign relations committee, and Sen. Barbara Boxer (Democrat, California), chair of the East Asia Sub-Committee of the US Senate, announced they would conduct separate hearings on human rights issues the Philippines on March 14.

The results of the investigations could affect the country's allotment of foreign aid and trade concessions.

Cuenco said the US congress is not the proper venue for the investigation; it should be an agency within the United Nations, like the human rights committee.

Opposition candidate Sen. Manuel Villar agreed with Cuenco on the last point. "Although I want the extra-judicial killings investigated, I am not in favor of the United States doing the investigation. It will not look good if the US will interfere in this. I think the United Nations or any unbiased international organization is in a better position to act on the issue," said Villar, a guest candidate of the Genuine Opposition (GO) coalition.

His colleague in the GO team Nikki Coseteng had less reservations. She said "human rights must be protected at all costs."

But administration senatorial candidates Ralph Recto and Prospero Pichay joined the chorus of legislators who told US legislators to "mind their own business" and stop poking their noses into the country's internal affairs. The same view was aired earlier by former opposition senator and human rights lawyer Joker Arroyo, who is not aligned with the administration.

Argued Recto: "With its awful record in Iraq, the United States may not be in the best position to pontificate on human rights, given one reputable and uncontested British estimate that 100,000 Iraqi civilians have died since the US invasion."

With reports from Cynthia D. Balana

AFP says NPA on killing spree vs ex-rebs

THE MILITARY YESTERDAY ACCUSED the communist New People's Army of engaging in a "killing spree" against former members the past few days.

Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro, Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesperson, said the NPA, not the military, was behind the killing of Bayan Muna member Siche Bustamante-Gandinao in Salay, Misamis Oriental, on Saturday.

The rebel group was also behind the attempt on the lives of two other former NPA members in two separate incidents in Agusan del Sur over the weekend, Bacarro said.

He said the AFP condemned the killing of Gandinao, 56, who was shot dead in front of her family near their home in Salay by an assailant on a motorbike.

"Gandinao had been cooperating with the government after she turned her back on the CPP-NPA," Bacarro said without elaborating. The CPP is the Communist Party of the Philippines. *Christine O. Avendaño*

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45M registered voters? It's impossible, says Chiz

By Norman Bordadora

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS' estimated 45 million registered voters for the May elections was doubtful, according to Genuine Opposition candidate Francis "Chiz" Escudero.

Escudero said a group of experts, whom he did not want to name, showed that it was improbable that 45 million voters would register out of a population of 87 million.

"According to this analysis, there should be no more than 25 million "'possible actual voters,'" Escudero told the weekly Bulong Pulungan forum.

Escudero also asked why the complete voters' list from which the actual number of registrants can be verified was still unavailable.

"The last day of registration was on Dec. 31. They may now be two months too late in coming up with the complete voters' list," he said.

Because of death, disability, migration, imprisonment and other factors, there should be less voters in 2007 than in 2004, said Escudero.

There were some 43.5 million voters in the 2004 elections. There are now an estimated 45 million.

"If there was a big difference [in the actual number of voters and the Comelec figures on registered voters] in 2004, there's a much bigger difference now," Escudero said.

Escudero also questioned why the Comelec was planning to print 45 million ballots for the May elections when there has never been an election in which voter turnout was 100 percent.

A source at the National Printing Office said that workers there have been working overtime to come up with 45 million ballots at a pace of 1.1 million to 1.2 million ballots a day.

Escudero said that the analysis of the unnamed expert group showed that with a life expectancy of 75 years and a population growth rate of 1.8 percent, there may not be that many individuals at least 18 years of age that would qualify as voters.

The group estimated the qualified number of voters at 49 percent of the population.

It also pegged at 10 million the number of voters that may be deducted from the actual number of qualified voters because of death, disability, imprisonment and other factors.

With 49 percent of out a population of 87 million qualifying as voters, the number of voters would number just 42.63 million, Escudero said.

An 80 percent registration probability from among the qualified voters will further trim the number of voters to just 34.4 million.

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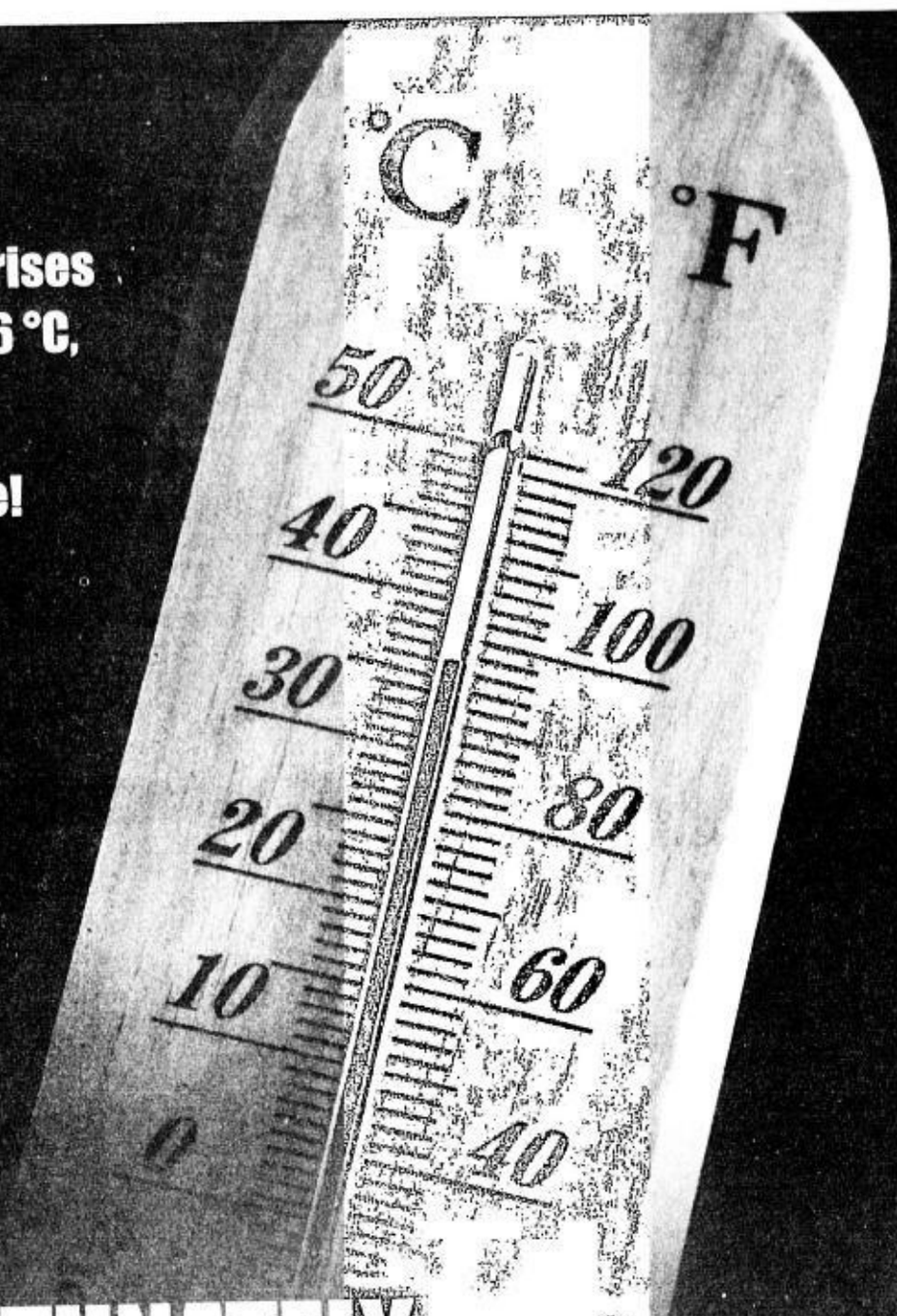

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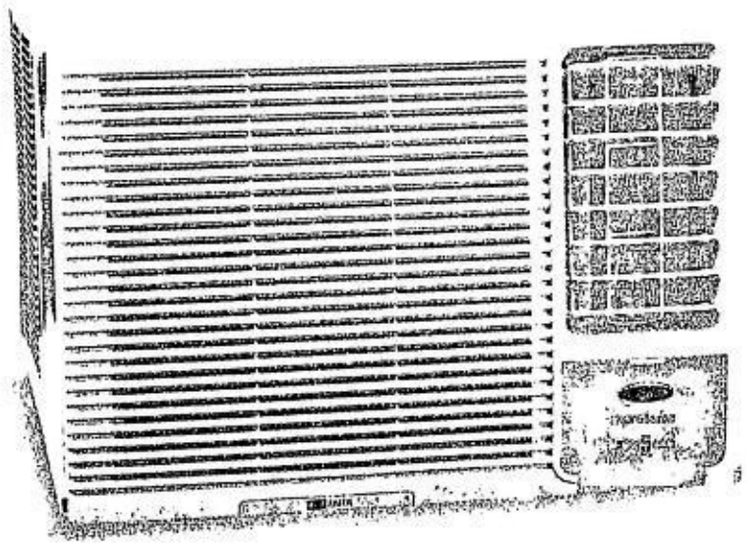

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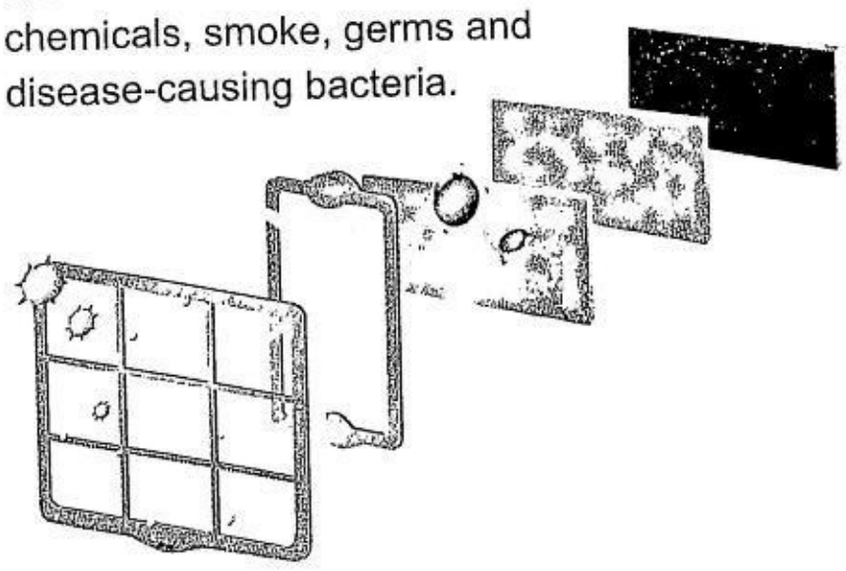

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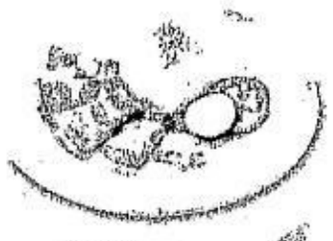

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GMA says GO's only platform is to oust her

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

A TOUGH-TALKING PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday accused the opposition of having no platform except to bring her down.

"They have no platform. They just want to bring me down. They scare away investors, that way they keep the people poor," the President said in an hour-long interview with BizNews Asia editor-in-chief Tony Lopez which members of the Malacañang Press Corps were allowed to witness.

"The real misery index is in the miserable policies the opposition wants to inflict on our nation. They prefer to go back in time. They want to scare away investments. They want to keep the poor down," she said.

But she said God has been good to her and kept her in power, despite the destabilization attempts and the unpopular decisions she made and despite her having "stepped on sensitive toes."

She said her success comes from her being focused on governance above the noise of politics, and her not having any cronies unlike her predecessors.

"I really don't [have any cronies]. When I go to parties or functions, I don't have a retinue of private people around me...I don't have a table [of cronies], just myself," she said.

She said she does not have anyone who could be said to be close to her "because I've learned from observations of the past."

While saying she did not want to get involved in the May elections, the President said she wants to secure a majority in the 24-member Senate to push her reform agenda.

"I am completely focused on governance, on driving the economy and ensuring peace and order so I am not preoccupied with the elections although I do hope that the elections will be about the future rather than the past, about policies and issues rather than personalities and history and I have great faith in Filipino voters," she said.

"What you can count on from me is more reform legislation to keep the nation moving forward, but of course it will be easier to get that done if we have the majority," Ms Arroyo said.

She said "the greatest test of the candidates' character is his or her position on issues, do they champion new ideas or old prejudices? Are they willing to make tough choices or do what is expedient and popular to win? I will leave that to the people to decide."

While the opposition is scaring away investors, she herself is single-minded in driving the economy toward First World status by 2020, or 10 years after her six-year term expires, the President said.

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THANKS TO GMA

'Left now united behind Satur'

By TJ Burgonio and Christian V. Esguerra

WHERE THE LEADERS OF THE COMMUnist party have failed, President Macapagal-Arroyo has succeeded in "uniting" the divided Left and progressive movements, as the government steps up its campaign against party-list groups ahead of the May 14 elections.

Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo, facing arrest for the killing of 15 New People's Army members suspected of being government spies in Leyte 22 years ago, has been receiving expressions of support even from rival groups within the leftist movement.

"This is a good development. The government of GMA, without realizing it, is uniting not only the [political] opposition but the divided Left and progressive forces," said Ocampo's lawyer, Romeo Capulong, in a phone interview.

In a sign that they could "stand shoulder to shoulder," the militant Sanlakas group on Wednesday condemned the issuance of an arrest warrant against Ocampo and the subsequent raid of his home in Quezon City on Saturday as an "attempt to silence one of its [government's] staunchest critics" ahead of the elections.

Under normal circumstances, Bayan Muna, which is allied with the "reaffirmist" group loyal to communist party founder Jose Ma. Sison, and Sanlakas, identified with the opposing "rejectionist" group, would have made strange bedfellows.

The leftist movement broke up in the mid-'80s after younger party leaders questioned Sison's strategy and dogma after he broke away from the pro-Soviet Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP) and established the Maoist-oriented Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in 1968.

The schism widened after the Left boycotted the 1986 snap election and the subsequent people power revolt that toppled Ferdinand Marcos and installed Corazon Aquino in the presidency.

Ocampo, Sison and 51 others have been ordered arrested on multiple murder charges arising from the discovery of a mass grave containing what were believed to be the remains of NPA members executed in a communist party purge, in Inopacan, Leyte, in August last year. The leftist leaders have denied the charges.

Prescribed

The remains of 67 people were found in the mass grave but only 15 were identified by their relatives, leading to the charges.

Capulong, however, said that contrary to reports, none of the 15 skeletal remains were identified by forensic experts from the Philippine National Police's Crime Laboratory.

Ocampo's lawyers also argued that the supposed crime occurred 22 years ago, and was thus beyond the prescription period for the filing of murder charges.

Ocampo's promise to surrender over the weekend would have to wait a few more days after his lawyers had a hard time obtaining documents from the Leyte court that issued the arrest warrant, Capulong said.

He said the documents were needed for the petition he would be filing in the Supreme Court tomorrow or Friday to show the procedural infirmities that attended the issuance of the warrant, including the use of "inadmissible evidence" like the confessions of five witnesses.

"He [Ocampo] will appear on or before Friday," Capulong said. "They [authorities] should just wait for him to come out."

Ocampo's lawyers will file the petition against Judge Ephrem Abando and prosecutor Rosulo Vivero, who issued the warrant and filed the information, respectively, and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez for grave abuse of discretion.

Under detention

Capulong said the documents would also prove that Ocampo was under military detention when the killings took place.

Capulong, at the same time, lauded Sen. Joker Arroyo after the latter asked Malacañang to stop the military harassment of Ocampo.

"Finally, Joker has emerged. His statement is most helpful," Capulong said.

He, however, said Arroyo should have taken the extra step of urging the President to put a stop to the killing of militants.

Arroyo was a leading human rights lawyer during and after martial law. He continued his activism through the impeachment trial of President Joseph Estrada in 2000 where he was one of the prosecutors.

"But I wish he'd go and see his principal and take up the matter of the killings with her—and tell her to stop them. I'm sure his view will carry weight," Capulong added.

Arroyo is running for reelection under the administration's Team Unity slate.

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Corrections

IN the March 10 issue, a story on page A2—"Nur barred from Saudi embassy"—misstated that Nur Misuari founded the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Misuari is the founder of the Moro National Liberation Front—not the MILF.

IN the March 11 issue, an article on page A14—"Ordeal of Moros in the war on terror"—misstated the year when Abu Sayyaf bandits kidnapped teachers and students of a school in Basilan. The abduction took place in 2000—not 2001.

The same article misspelled the place where the kidnapping happened. The victims were abducted in Tumahubong—not Tumaobong. Tumahubong is a barangay—not a town—in the Basilan municipality of Sumisip—not Lamitan.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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SC remands LP row to Comelec

By Leila B. Salaverria and Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE SUPREME COURT YESTERDAY UPHELD the authority of the Commission on Elections to resolve the leadership dispute within the Liberal Party which split into two factions in 2005 after its leaders made conflicting stance on the legitimacy of President Macacapal-Arroyo.

The high court did not rule on which of the two factions should be recognized and instead sent back the case to the Comelec which will determine if the party's constitution has been duly amended, and to report to the high court on its findings five days after receiving notice.

The warring LP factions, led by Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and Sen. Franklin Drilon, had cited different LP constitutions to back up their contentions that they were the valid leaders of the party.

In its resolution, the high court said the Comelec should resolve whether or not the Daza/Drilon amendments to the LP (Salonga) Constitution have been duly ratified.

The high tribunal yesterday released a draft of the resolution.

This was confirmed by the court's spokesperson Midas Marquez who said the actual copy was still being prepared, but that he had authority from Chief Justice Reynato Puno to speak about the matter.

Welcomed by both camps

The Drilon-faction welcomed the court's decision, saying it upheld Drilon's presidency and effectively invalidated the "rump session" conducted by Atienza in March last year.

"(With the SC decision) Senator Drilon continues to be the president of the Liberal Party and continues to perform his functions, including nominating official LP candidates for the 2007 elections," LP vice president Florencio "Butch" Abad said.

Abad said the SC decision to remand the leadership row to the Comelec meant there was no need for an election, as conducted by Atienza, and that Drilon would remain the party president up to November this year.

For Atienza, however, the SC decision was a victory for his group.

"We consider this a victory for us," Atienza said. "We never questioned the authority of Comelec to decide on the leadership dispute of the Party, even when it was Drilon who brought it first to the Comelec and then to the Supreme Court when the poll body's decision was not to his liking."

Atienza also expressed confidence the Comelec would rule that the Salonga Constitution is the constitution of the LP; that Drilon and the other LP officers' terms ended last July 2005, and that elections are needed to finally resolve this issue.

The leadership dispute between the two camps arose when Drilon, then Liberal Party president, called for President Arroyo's resignation in July 2005 due to her alleged involvement in electoral fraud.

But Atienza's group, which is supportive of the President, denounced the call and said party members were not consulted before Drilon made the announcement.

In March 2006, Atienza's group held an election in which he was chosen as the party president and then President's chief of staff Mike Defensor as chair.

Drilon called the election illegal and later brought the matter to the Commission on Elections.

The poll body then ordered the party to hold a new election that it would supervise. But Drilon questioned the Comelec decision before the high court, which temporarily stopped the election.

Drilon's camp had argued that the party's Daza/Drilon constitution, which he said amended the Salonga constitution in 1999, provides for a succession of the next in command when the president leaves. (Daza refers to Raul Daza, while Salonga refers to Jovito Salonga.)

Therefore, Drilon, who succeeded Abad as party president in 2004 when the latter was named education secretary, became the party's president until the end of his term in November 2007, lawyer William Asis had said.

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Flexible Charter seen to bring in $7B in investments

By Cynthia D. Balana

BY RELAXING "RIGID CONSTITUTIONAL provisions," the country could generate $5 billion to $7 billion (P242 billion to P339 billion) in foreign direct investments a year, said Team Unity candidate Sen. Edgardo Angara.

Speaking on Monday during the first of a series of public debates among the senatorial aspirants, Angara said FDIs in the sectors of telecommunications, media and infrastructure were restricted by constitutional provisions.

He said investment inflows only reached $2.35 billion (P114 billion) last year because of Constitutional provisions that have "manacled" the country's effort to double or triple its FDIs.

Angara said that forward-looking countries were competing for foreign investments and were modernizing their economies to keep up with the new realities of the millennium.

He said that even China had opened up its economy to accommodate FDI inflows—one of the reasons why China is considered a modern economic miracle.

The debate, sponsored by the Parish Pastoral Councils for Responsible Voting, was aired on cable news channel ANC. Angara exchanged views with Genuine Opposition senatorial candidate Francis "Chiz" Escudero and lawyer Oliver Lozano of the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan.

The panelists were Korina Sanchez of ABS-CBN, Marvic Leonen of the UP College of Law and Benjamin Tolosa, chair of the Ateneo de Manila University political science department.

Angara said the next Congress should consider two political reform legislation he had filed with the Senate: the Political Party Act and the Campaign Finance Reform Act.

The twin measures, he said, would make political parties issue-based, not personality-based. It would strengthen political parties by making them less vulnerable to corruption and compromise and would stop the flow of dirty and vested interest money into political campaigns.

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Arson probers blame Comelec fire on overloaded electricals

By Alcuin Papa

A BUSTED FIRE EXTINGUISHER, AN overloaded electrical system and a condemned building all contributed to the fire at the Commission on Elections last weekend, an inter-agency arson investigation team said yesterday.

Undersecretary Marius Corpus of the Department of Interior and Local Government said they would look into possible negligence on the part of the Comelec.

"There were a lot of electrical extensions because of appliances and no effort to rewire the building's electrical system. This contributed to the cause of the fire," Corpuz said yesterday in a press conference, reporting on the investigation's initial findings.

He added that the building had been condemned and notice was sent to the Comelec.

Transfer

In fairness to the Comelec, Corpus said efforts were ongoing to transfer the Comelec office to another location. "But that depends on the availability of funds."

Supt. Fennimore Jaudian of the Inter-Agency Arson Task Force (IATF) said the wooden materials and layout of the building, which was constructed in the 1940s before World War II, also contributed to the fire.

Jaudian told reporters that they had interviewed five witnesses to the fire.

One witness, Jaime Galpo, said he tried to use a fire extinguisher to douse the fire.

"Unfortunately the fire extinguisher failed to operate," Jaudian said, adding that they had traced the origin of the fire to the ceiling of the Comelec's General Services Division.

Witness Ariel Sandrino told the task force he was sleeping inside the GSD office when he was roused by shouts of "Fire!" from outside the building. He woke up his companion, Galpo, and ordered him to bring the fire extinguisher which unfortunately, malfunctioned.

Galpo also told investigators that he wanted to shut off the electricity to minimize the fire. But he was worried other Comelec employees who were sleeping inside the building would be trapped because they would not be able to find their way out.

Building compromised

"This [failure to shut off the electricity] also contributed to the fire. But this choice might be difficult to accept for some people. It was a judgment call. By not shutting off the power, people's lives were saved but it compromised the building," Corpus said.

Employees of the poll body had been spending nights in the building in preparation for the May elections.

At present, the IATF is analyzing the debris and ashes from the fire for traces of chemicals or explosive compounds. This may take three to four days, according to George Delara of the National Bureau of Investigation.

Lack of chemical trace

But Jaudian cautioned that the lack of any trace chemicals did not mean the fire was not caused by arson.

"We are not ruling out any angle. It is too early to point out any possible cause," said Jaudian, who trained in the US in arson and post-fire investigation.

He said they would be interviewing two more Comelec employees, members of the Philippine National Police (PNP) Special Action Force (SAF), security guards and firemen who were at the scene.

Corpus estimated that P20 million was lost in the fire.

Poll protests in burned building rendered moot

By Nikko Dizon

WITH EVIDENCE AND DOCUments burned in the fire that razed the old Commission on Elections building last Sunday, election protests on the local level will most likely be rendered moot and academic, according to prominent election lawyers and a ranking Comelec official.

"Most of the cases could be rendered moot and academic because by the time [copies of evidence] are consolidated, the [May 14] elections could be over," lawyer Romeo Macalintal told reporters at the Comelec yesterday.

Macalintal was referring to copies of election returns (ERs) that could be used as evidence in electoral protests in lieu of the official ballots that had been burned.

"You will have to look for the ERs. But how soon can the parties retrieve or request from Namfrel (National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections) or the political parties?" Macalintal said.

In separate interviews, election lawyer Leila de Lima and Comelec executive director, Pio Jose Joson, told the INQUIRER that there had been election protests resolved by the Comelec divisions. But there could be a problem if the parties would want to file a motion for reconsideration before the Comelec en banc or elevate it to the Supreme Court as the records are all gone.

Both Macalintal and De Lima have cases that are still pending with the Comelec.

De Lima said the original ballots needed for the case of the unseated mayor of Lemery, Batangas were lost in the fire.

'Element of negligence'

"The ballots have yet to be appreciated by the Comelec division," she said, noting that electoral protests filed by politicians could affect their electoral bids.

De Lima said that regardless of whether the fire was sabotage or a result of force majeure, there was still an "element of negligence" on the part of the Comelec.

"They have known that this was a condemned building—a fire hazard, yet they still stored sensitive materials there. There's nothing more sensitive than the original ballots," De Lima said.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, March 14, 2006
3rd Week of Lent

1st Reading: Dt 4-8,
Gospel: Matthew 5:17-19

Jesus said to his disciples, "Do not think that I have come to remove the Law and the Prophets. I have not come to remove but to fulfill them. I tell you this: as long as heaven and earth last, not the smallest letter or stroke of the Law will change until all is fulfilled.

"So then, whoever breaks the least important of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be the least in the kingdom of heaven. On the other hand, whoever obeys them and teaches others to do the same will be great in the kingdom of heaven."

Commentary

God gives his laws to his people to make them wise and intelligent. We are to obey so that others may see this wisdom and come to know our God who is so close to us. Moses exhorts the people about the law: Don't forget, be on your guard and pass them on, live them. And Jesus teaches that same law with the same passion and urgency. But Jesus wants more—he wants the spirit and the heart of the law to be observed, not just outward obedience or appearances. We are not to forget what God has taught us in Jesus and we are to practice it thoroughly—as believers and as community/church, so that others may see that our God is near to us, and that God's wisdom is what sources all our actions and relationships. How are we showing forth this wisdom as a community today?

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US Marines land in Albay to help typhoon victims

By Ephraim Aguilar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—AT LEAST 150 MEMBERS of the 3rd US Marine Expeditionary Brigade based in Okinawa and a 300-man crew based in San Diego, California, arrived here yesterday on a humanitarian mission to help the mudslide victims of Albay.

The Americans immediately fanned out after stepping off the USS Comstock, which docked at the Legazpi port.

The Marines will be involved in medical missions, repair of damaged classrooms and cleanup drives in six villages in Legazpi, Daraga and Guinobatan under the week-long P1.3-million project, said 2nd Lt. Brian Block, brigade spokesperson.

The contingent also brought 10,000 pounds of supplies, food, clothing and toys for the typhoon survivors.

Two medical teams each consisting of 15 Marines were deployed to relocation sites and transit shelters in Barangay Taysan in Legazpi, Travesia in Guinobatan, and Tabon-Tabon, Tagas and the Daraga North Central School in Daraga.

Capt. Lowen Gil Marquez, commander of the Armed Forces of the Philippines-Civil Relations Unit in Bicol, said six teams from the AFP and two from the Philippine National Police joined the project.

WHO assistance

Also yesterday, the World Health Organization announced it had delivered to the Department of Health and local government units in Bicol $150,000 worth of medical supplies, equipment and technical support for the region.

Dr. Malou Barrameda, WHO program officer, said the Italian government had donated, through the WHO, emergency health kits worth $21,617. Each health kit could meet the needs of 10,000 people for three months.

The Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office in Albay said 3,202 families or 16,592 persons remained in 16 evacuation and transit centers in the province.

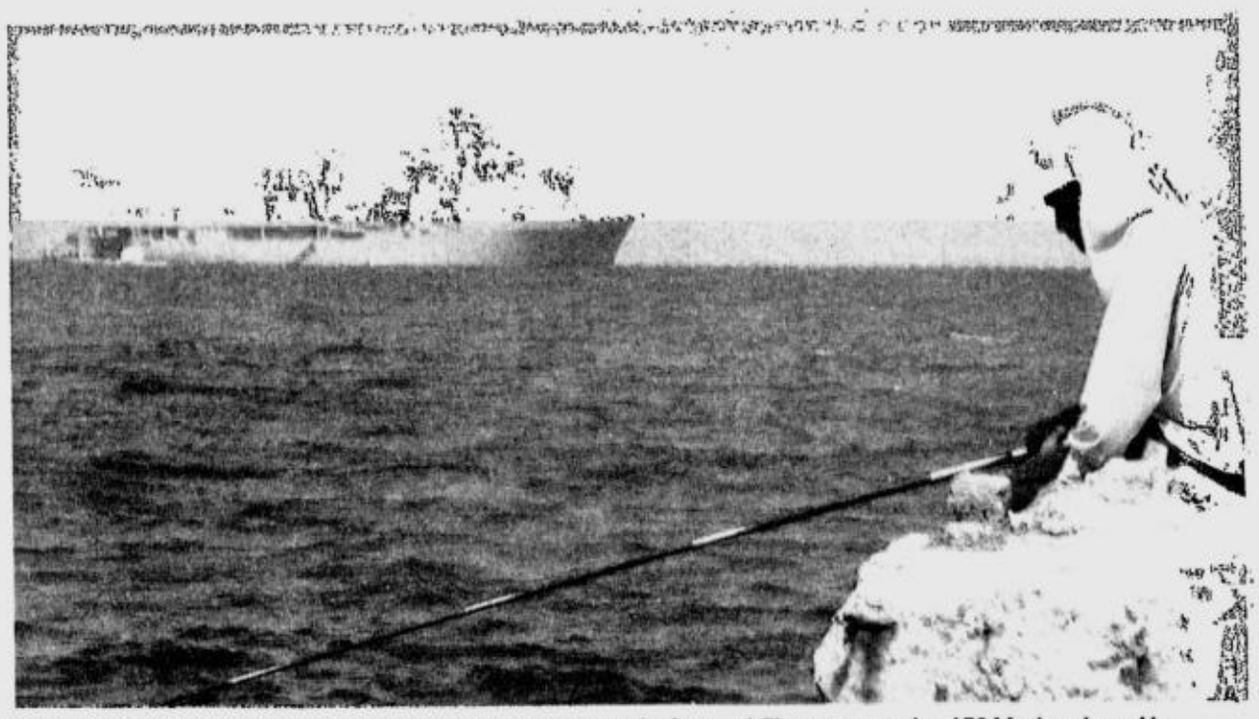
Most of the families are waiting to be moved into houses being built by the provincial government and nongovernment organizations like Gawad Kalinga and the Sisters of Charity.

Land for relocation needed

Albay Gov. Fernando Gonzalez said in a radio interview Monday that 30 hectares of land were needed for the relocation sites.

Gonzalez said 500 houses were being constructed in Barangay Taysan in this city and 300 houses at a newly identified relocation site in Anislag, Daraga, Albay.

He said relocation sites had been identified in Barangay Culliat in Daraga and another in Camalig town.



HUMANITARIAN MISSION: The USS Comstock docks at the Legazpi City port carrying 150 Marines based in Okinawa and a 300-man crew based in San Diego, California. The US Marines will conduct medical missions, repair classrooms and hold cleanup drives in six villages in Legazpi, Daraga and Guinobatan, Albay, for seven days starting Tuesday.
JOANNA LOS BANOS/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

DSWD: 1,387 donated tents for Bicol lying around unused

From page A1

ters in packed evacuation centers when she visited them in late January.

When the INQUIRER visited the province, also in late January, the 1,800 former residents of Barangay Padang in Legazpi City, who were transferred to the MMDA Village, were crammed into 383 plastic and tarpaulin shanties and 31 tents.

The families that were in the 16-square-meter shanties had to endure the sweltering heat and the noxious smell emitted by the plastic sheets during the day, making children and even adults sick.

Bothered by the unusual congestion despite having sent tents received from foreign donors, Cabral last week dispatched a staff member of the agency's Program Management Bureau to account for all the tents.

Of the 1,887 tents sent, 420 were large enough to serve as temporary classrooms. The rest could each accommodate a family of six, Cabral had said earlier.

Foreign donations

Records showed that Japan sent 150 "one-family" tents last Dec. 6. Distribution started on Dec. 7 and was completed on Dec. 12.

China also donated 2,630 tents. The DSWD received the first batch of 930 as early as Nov. 14. The delivery was only completed on March 7, said the report.

On Jan. 11, China sent an additional 1,700 tents—420 of which could each accommodate 12 persons and the rest six persons each.

Singapore sent 150 tents worth P600,000 but only 33 of them were released to beneficiaries because the tents were too small.

"We will become more energetic in monitoring relief goods that we release them to disaster victims to be sure that they are used for their purpose," Cabral said.

From now on, the DSWD will ask beneficiaries to sign their names upon release of relief items, she said.

Cabral 'confused'

In Legazpi City, Albay Gov. Fernando Gonzalez said he could account for every single tent delivered. He said of the last batch of 500 tents turned over to him, around 80 had been distributed to the intended recipients.

The remaining tents were being reserved for the refugees still housed in three schools in Daraga, Albay, when they are transferred to transit centers.

Gonzalez said Cabral was "just confused." He said there had been "day-to-day developments in our relief efforts."

"We have to admit that there is congestion, that is why we are now moving the evacuees to transit centers, where we will temporarily hold them while their permanent houses in the relocation sites are being built," he said.

Gonzalez said the transit areas would not necessarily be all-tent cities but could be of the barracks-type where shelters made of light materials would be built to protect villagers against the summer heat. ***With a report from Ephraim Aguilar, Inquirer Southern Luzon Bureau***

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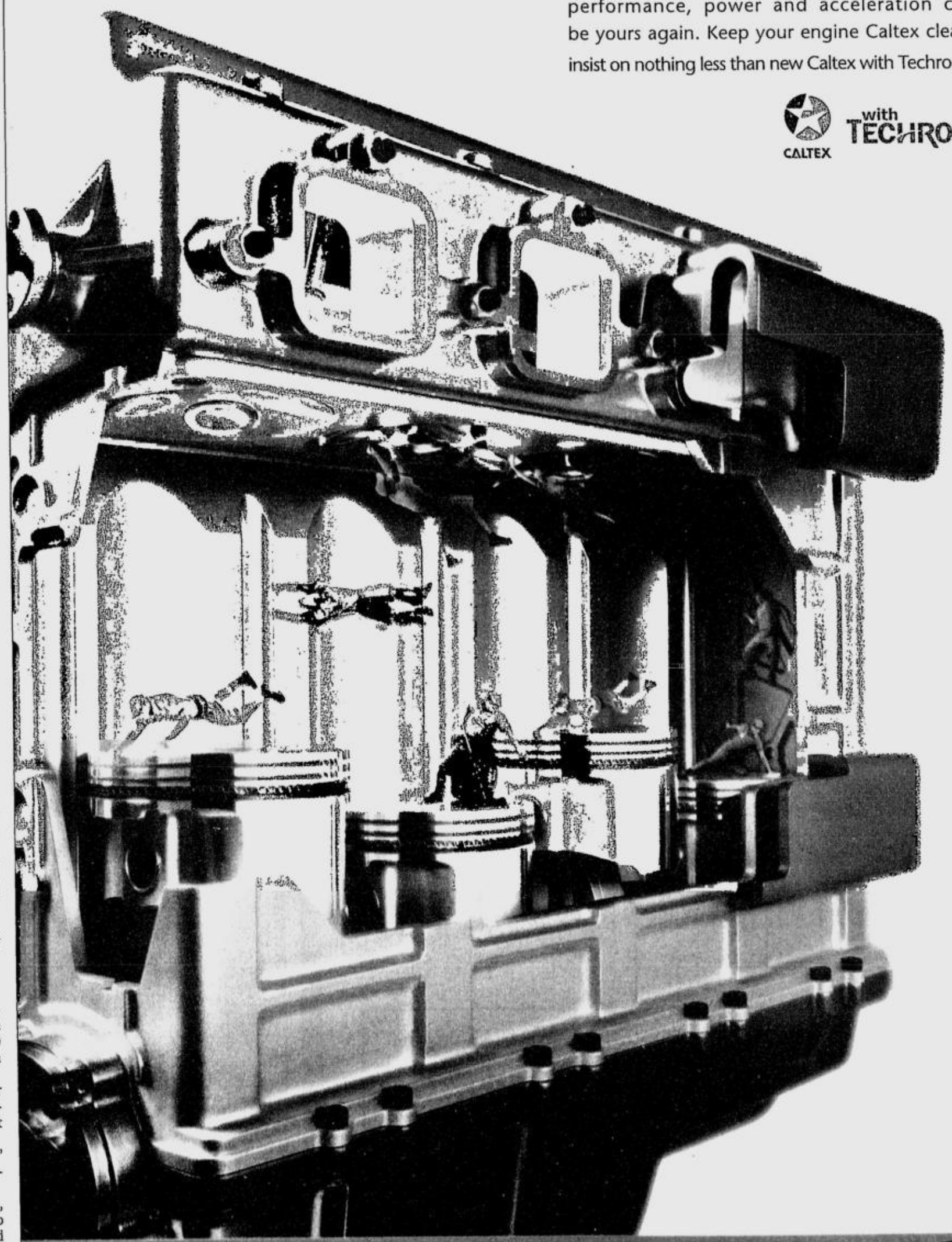

TECHRON

What Drives You CALTEX

Bishops junk call to endorse candidates

SAD SACKS: Comelec employees try to salvage as much as they can of the documents which were stored in sacks that were damaged by water. They hang them out to dry right on the gate of their office. REM ZAMORA

From page A1

lay political party that is participating in elections for the first time since it was formed three years ago.

Dagupan-Lingayen Archbishop Oscar Cruz, a former CBCP president, reminded Velarde that the Church does not engage in partisan politics "like he does."

Cruz said it was "incongruous" for Velarde to tell the Catholic Church "to be like the Iglesia ni Cristo" whose followers vote according to directives from their leaders during elections.

Questioning Velarde's so-called "prosperity gospel," Cruz said that the El Shaddai leader should not tell the Catholic Church what to do.

"Only the Pope can do that," Cruz said.

In an interview with the INQUIRER on Saturday, Velarde proposed that priests and prelates endorse 18 deserving senatorial candidates that voters could choose from for the 12 Senate seats up for grabs in the May balloting.

Lagdameo recalled that the CBCP—composed of 115 members in 86 dioceses—had issued a pastoral letter in January exhorting the flock not only to pray but to be vigilant and to examine the candidates and their platform of government.

"They may even come to an agreement among themselves whom to vote; but each must personally come to his/her decision. They will not vote according to personality or winnability but in view of the candidates' agenda of government," Lagdameo said.

'Catholic vote'

Dismissing suggestions of a "Catholic vote," Lagdameo said Catholics were free to vote for their own respective choices.

"On the other hand, because Catholics are almost everywhere, many of the candidates who win, win by Catholics' votes; but this is no reason to brag about, because the candidates win or lose by his own virtue or lack of it, and the electors vote according to their respective persuasion and conviction," he said.

The bishops "trust the wisdom of the people" if only they will not be influenced by the so-called "guns, goons and gold," and if only the electoral process will be respected and "not manipulated by self-interest," he said.

"If the wisdom of the people were allowed freely to function, they will get the leaders they want or they get the leaders they deserve," Lagdameo said.

Without elaborating, the CBCP president said the bishops respected "what the leaders of El Shaddai and other groups have been doing for years."

But the CBCP "will still maintain the freedom of Catholic members to choose their candidates," he said.

Bishops individual support

"We expect them to discern, discuss and personally decide whom to vote," Lagdameo said. "In the end, we cannot be genuinely sure whether the candidates who have been dictated on the voters will really serve them."

Msgr. Pedro Quitorio III, CBCP spokesperson, said that while the Church would never endorse candidates, it would allow bishops to express individually support for candidates.

"There will not be a nationwide mobilization wherein the Church will tell the people to look to their left or right and everyone will do so. But we also respect the political persuasion of each one. Even priests can endorse candidates as long as it is within their own parish," Quitorio told reporters.

He said the CBCP did not see any problem with the reported support of some bishops for the party-list group, Ang Kapatiran. Under Canon Law, Church leaders are allowed to endorse candidates "in defense of the Church and in defense of the common good."

Quitorio recalled that the Church "encouraged people to wear yellow" during the 1986 snap presidential election, in a show of support for Corazon Aquino, who became president after the ouster of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos. He said there were clear indicators then that Marcos "was not helping the common good."

Quitorio also said the Church was not "shying away" from the elections, as Velarde had suggested. He said that in the January pastoral letter, the CBCP encouraged study groups at the grass roots, "guiding people in the localities to have a very educated discernment process for the elections."

Pregnant women can't be fired ...

From page A1

co "on account of her pregnancy which justified her absences and, thus, committed a prohibited act rendering the dismissal illegal."

Velasco was fired in January 1995 for her absences in 1994.

The high court said Velasco's absences were justified even though the dates on the medical certificates she had submitted did not correspond to the actual dates of her absences.

"It would be unreasonable to isolate such a condition strictly to the dates stated in the medical certificate or the discharge summary. It can be safely assumed that the absences that are not covered by, but which nonetheless approximate, the dates stated in the discharge summary and medical certificate, are due to the continuing condition of pregnancy and related illnesses, and, hence, are justified absences," the tribunal said.

'Undeniable fact'

Del Monte's claim that Velasco was fired because of her habitual neglect of duties was deemed unacceptable by the high court, which said it was clear that she was unable to report for work because of her pregnancy...

The tribunal said Del Monte could not "use these previous infractions to lay down a pattern of absenteeism or habitual disregard of company rules to justify" Velasco's dismissal.

"The undeniable fact is that during her complained absences in 1994, [Velasco] was pregnant and suffered related illnesses. Again, it must be stressed that [her] discharge by reason of absences caused by her pregnancy is covered by the prohibition under the Labor Code. Since her last string of absences is justifiable and had been subsequently explained, [Del Monte] had no legal basis in considering these absences together with her prior infractions as gross and habitual neglect," it said.

The high court also disagreed with Del Monte's claim that Velasco's pregnancy did not excuse her from filing prior notice for her absence.

It pointed out that under the company's rules, absences could be subsequently justified, and upheld the earlier findings of the appellate court and the NLRC that Velasco had attempted to file leaves of absence but that her supervisor had refused to receive them.

Villagers shield outgunned...

From page A1

the military the communist rebels massed outside the village last weekend and sent scouts who ordered him and his neighbors to leave the area or stay inside their homes to avoid being caught in the crossfire, Ilarde told reporters.

Real courage

The stubborn villagers forced the guerrillas to abandon their attack and withdraw, Ilarde said.

"It takes real courage to defy a terrorist group who will not hesitate to kill just to get what they want," said Northern Luzon Command chief Lt. Gen. Bonifacio Ramos.

What the people did "is a manifestation of their strong revulsion (toward) these NPA extortionists," he added.

The nearly four-decade Maoist rebellion by some 7,000 NPA rebels is one of the world's longest running insurgencies. The military says it survives mainly by extorting money and supplies from businesses and politicians.

The US state department has put the group and its mother organization, the Communist Party of the Philippines, in its foreign "terrorist" blacklist. *AFP*

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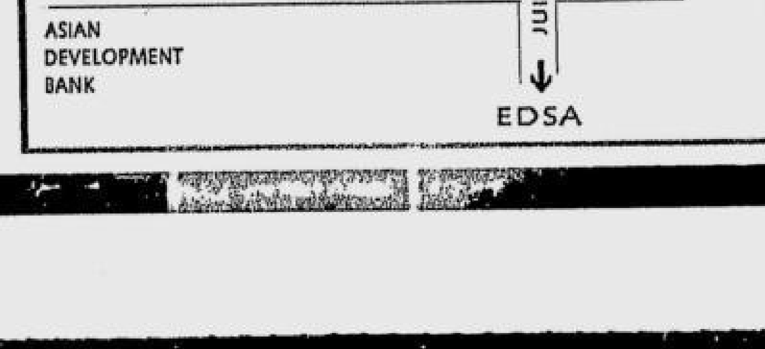

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Cesar Montano to announce final decision today

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

POPULAR MOVIE star Cesar Montano, the last-minute substitute senatorial candidate in the administration's Team Unity, will announce today his decision on whether or not to continue with his candidacy.

The actor-director is getting cold feet in his initial plunge into politics after apparently finding out too late that politics and show biz are two different worlds—there are no directors to guide you and no talent fee for extra chores like hosting during election campaigns.

In an interview, Montano's manager Norma Japitana said the actor would announce at a press conference today his final decision on whether to leave or stay on with Team Unity and put an to end to the speculation over his supposed plan to quit because of financial and logistics problems.

Pep talk

Japitana said Montano had spoken last Monday with President Macapagal-Arroyo who assured the actor that the administration would provide the support he needed to jump-start his senatorial campaign.

Japitana did not say whether the pep talk with the President helped in getting Montano to make up his mind. She refused to comment on reports that Montano was abandoning Team Unity because of the administration's failure to come up with the promised financial support.

"We'll talk about it tonight and make a decision tomorrow [today]," said Japitana. Montano and Japitana were at the Manila Hotel yesterday where Team Unity candidates were meeting with a group of mayors.

Team Unity spokesperson Joseph "Ace" Durano confirmed that discussions did indeed take place between the President and Montano but he gave no details.

Durano was confident that Montano would eventually make up his mind and stick with the team.

He said Montano may have had "high expectations" when he agreed to fill in for the 12th Team Unity bet, Leyte Gov. Jericho Petilla, who decided to seek re-election.

Montano has been having problems catching up with the other more seasoned candidates in the administration ticket during campaign sorties. This is evident from the absence of support staff for Montano at the campaign site to put up his banners, distribute his flyers and set up mini-rallies. His campaign has so far been rudderless. People who go to the rallies perceive him as more of a movie star than a politician.

Montano himself has admitted that when he filed his candidacy papers he knew nothing about politics and that he needed a crash course in politics.

Durano said Team Unity has not been exactly blameless where taking care of Montano was concerned. But he denied that the President or Team Unity officials had promised the actor-director as much as P200 million in campaign funds as the opposition has alleged.

"I guess he is just new to politics, that is why he feels lost. We plan to make up for this in the next few days and we believe he will gain more confidence as he gains more experience," he said.

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Ex-Marine takes 4 hostages in Taguig courtroom

A FORMER MARINE took over a Taguig City court hearing the case of his girlfriend, taking hostage four people yesterday afternoon.

The hostage-taker was identified as Almario Villegas, a character actor and former Marine.

Armed with a handgun and a grenade, Villegas held captive two court employees, the complainant and the latter's lawyer in a land dispute case.

As of 9:15 last night, or nearly seven hours after the incident began at 2:40 p.m., Villegas showed no signs of freeing his captives. He had turned off the lights on the second floor of the Hall of Justice and could be seen peeking out of its glass windows. His girlfriend, Delia de la Cruz, was also with him.

Taguig Mayor Sigfrido Tinga and police chief Alfredo Corpuz were still trying to negotiate with Villegas as of press time.

Ana Santos, Taguig City public information officer, told reporters that De la Cruz was the defendant in a property foreclosure case in Taguig.

Santos said Villegas accompanied De la Cruz to the preliminary conference of the case filed by Gina Ramos and her lawyer Frederick Ballesteros.

Aside from Ramos and Ballesteros, Villegas took clerk of court lawyer Donna Dunuan and another unidentified court employee hostage.

Then he phoned stuntmen-friends who were on the set of the action series "Asian Treasures."

"He called us and said he was taking four hostages. We thought he was kidding, but he told us to wait for the news to break on TV," Jun Davis, a stuntman, said.

He said Villegas warned them not to enter the building.

Davis and another stuntman were nevertheless ushered into the justice complex to aid in negotiations. *Julie Aurelio*

GO scraps sorties

THE GENUINE OPPOsition has canceled its Mindanao sorties this week so their senatorial candidates can focus on giving more media interviews, outgoing campaign manager, San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito said.

The GO candidates were originally supposed to go to the Caraga region this week, to follow up their Davao sortie last week.

Instead, campaign handlers scheduled sorties in provinces near Metro Manila—Bulacan, Nueva Ecija and Pampanga.

Ejercito said it was the idea of new GO campaign manager, Sen. Sergio Osmeña III for the candidates to go on a "media blitz."

"We'll ask our candidates to go on their own in giving interviews. This way our candidates who are doing poorly in the surveys (can catch up)," he said on Monday as the 90-day senatorial campaign entered its fifth week. *Dona Pazzibugan*

Copy of serial numbers said to duplicate poll forms

From page A1

the printing of ballots, the Comelec provides "coded numbers" that "correspond to certain places."

"For instance, ballots for Manila are numbered 10,000 to 10,010 and those from Quezon City are numbered 12,000 to 12,010. If you fake ballots intended for Manila and Quezon City and your serial numbers don't fall within their series, then we will know they are fake," the source said.

The other source, who works at the NPO, pointed out that the copying of the serial numbers of ballots, election returns (ERs) and certificates of canvass (COCs) carried security implications.

The source said the printing of exact duplicates of election forms for purposes of fraud could be done outside the NPO compound on "original paper stock" (or the paper specifically ordered by the Comelec for ballots, ERs and COCs). "If [the forms are] printed with the same serial numbers and brought to the corresponding areas, then you have duplicates [that can be used for fraud]," he added.

The two sources made their remarks in reaction to Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos' dismissal of an incident where three casual employees of the NPO were caught copying the serial numbers of official ballots for the May 14 elections.

Overtime pay

Both sources requested anonymity, saying their respective positions did not allow them to speak on the record.

"If I make a comment and it doesn't jibe with that of the Comelec, then I risk antagonizing the commission," the first source said.

The other said many NPO employees were willing to come forward and speak about alleged irregularities at the government press, but only when their director-on-leave, Felipe Evardone, is dismissed by Malacañang for graft and violation of procurement laws, as had been twice recommended by the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC).

"Right now, the employees are earning well because of their overtime pay. They work overtime to beat the deadline for ballots. If we are caught speaking against the director, we might lose our overtime credits," the source said.

Abalos said at a press conference on Monday that he did not see how the copying of the ballots' serial numbers could lead to election fraud.

He said the incident might have been a mere "test" to see how "strict" the Comelec was in monitoring NPO operations.

But he said he had ordered an investigation.

The NPO is now printing from 1.1 million to 1.2 million ballots *(See story on Page A3.)* a day to come up with the 45 million ballots needed in the midterm elections.

It had been outsourcing the printing of election paraphernalia in past elections, but Evardone was able to arrange the agency's exclusive printing of all election forms this year.

"It is but logical that the agency mandated by law to print election paraphernalia does so exclusively rather than subcontracting the job," he said in a recent interview.

GO: Dismiss him

Evardone is the elder brother of Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone, the media director of the administration's Team Unity.

At yesterday's Bulong Pulungan news forum, Genuine Opposition spokesperson Adel Tamano said Malacañang should dismiss Evardone as well as the NPO officer in charge, Marietta de Guzman.

Tamano said Evardone should be removed from office altogether despite his having gone on leave for supposed propriety reasons.

"Even without the dismissal order, [Evardone] should resign because his continued stay at the NPO is improper with Ben as Team Unity's campaign manager," Tamano said.

GO senatorial candidate Francis Escudero also called for the dismissal of both Evardone and De Guzman.

"Even though he has gone on leave, their roles remain crucial in the printing of ballots, ERs and COCs," Escudero said.

Evardone went on leave after the governor's appointment as Team Unity media director.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita had earlier said that the PAGC papers had yet to reach his office.

But as early as last month, Ermita's deputy for legal affairs, Manuel Gaite, found merit in the PAGC recommendations and drafted two dismissal orders against Evardone for the signature of the executive secretary.

De Guzman is also facing graft charges in the Ombudsman for the alleged rigged bidding of P91 million worth of Bureau of Customs forms.

Disturbing developments

Escudero said that while GO was not accusing anyone just yet of planning election fraud, the developments at the Comelec and the NPO were disturbing.

"Perhaps we can't be faulted if we think there may be fraud because of recent developments," the senatorial candidate said, adding:

"First, there was the report of the printing of 50 million ballots. Then came the issue at the NPO wherein the director continues to hold sway despite being recommended for dismissal.

"And last, fire has hit the Commission on Elections itself. The Comelec has power over the whole country during the election period. Why wasn't it able to prevent a fire right in its own offices?" he said. *With a report from Jerome Aning*

Maguindanao governor modern-day Godfather

From page A1

glance if it were not for the gold Rolex on his wrist and his thick gold ring, unusual in impoverished Mindanao. Or if you sensed the loaded revolver in a holster under his T-shirt.

Ampatuan is the governor of Maguindanao province, but he's much more than that. He is a datu, or clan leader, and wields enough political power for President Macapagal-Arroyo to call him a valuable ally.

A 65-year-old with jet black, close-cropped hair, Ampatuan has been elected governor twice unopposed, and fully expects to be similarly voted to power at elections in May. Of the 22 mayors in his province, 18 are sons, grandsons or other relatives, and they all are likely to be reelected—also unopposed.

"It's because of popular support," the governor said in an interview at his farmhouse, sitting at the head of a long dining table as he tapped ash from a cigarette into a glass tumbler.

"Because I am so loved by the constituencies of the municipalities, they ask me to have my sons as representatives," he said, speaking in the Maguindanaon language.

Critics talk of his large private army, payoffs to local military commanders and vice-like grip on local politics. But Ampatuan says he and his allies are all democratically elected.

Disco shootout

If people don't run against them, he says, that's because they don't have much chance of winning.

He has four wives and about 30 children, Ampatuan says. One son is the governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, including Maguindanao.

His eldest son, then the mayor of Shariff Aguak, the provincial capital, was killed in 2002 in a bomb blast blamed on Moro separatists. Another son died the same month in a shootout in a disco.

The father and brother of one of the people involved in the disco gun battle were killed in an ambush within the hour. And tales abound of painful deaths suffered by those suspected in the bombing.

Tempted to seek revenge

Ampatuan says he has left investigations into the killing of his eldest son, and seven attempts on his own life, to the authorities.

"If I meet them (the assailants) face to face, I might not be able to control my emotions and I may be forced to extract revenge," he says. "But I have left it to the government to investigate."

Maguindanao, with a population of about 500,000, lies in western Mindanao. The muddy Rio Grande River and a few single-lane roads, cut through jungle, marshland and low-lying hills, where coconuts, rice and corn are cultivated.

In the 2004 presidential election, Ms Arroyo won most of the votes in Maguindanao. In one town, her rivals did not get even a single vote.

Commands loyalty

"The outside world may call it rigging, but it's the reality here," says Norie Unas, Maguindanao provincial administrator and a cousin of the governor's first wife.

"In the villages, people say, 'Whatever my boss wants, it's OK. He's providing for my family.' It's clannish."

Ampatuan says the overwhelming vote for Ms Arroyo came because the people supported her programs, and were loyal to him.

Asked who his constituents were more loyal to, he chuckled and said: "More will follow me."

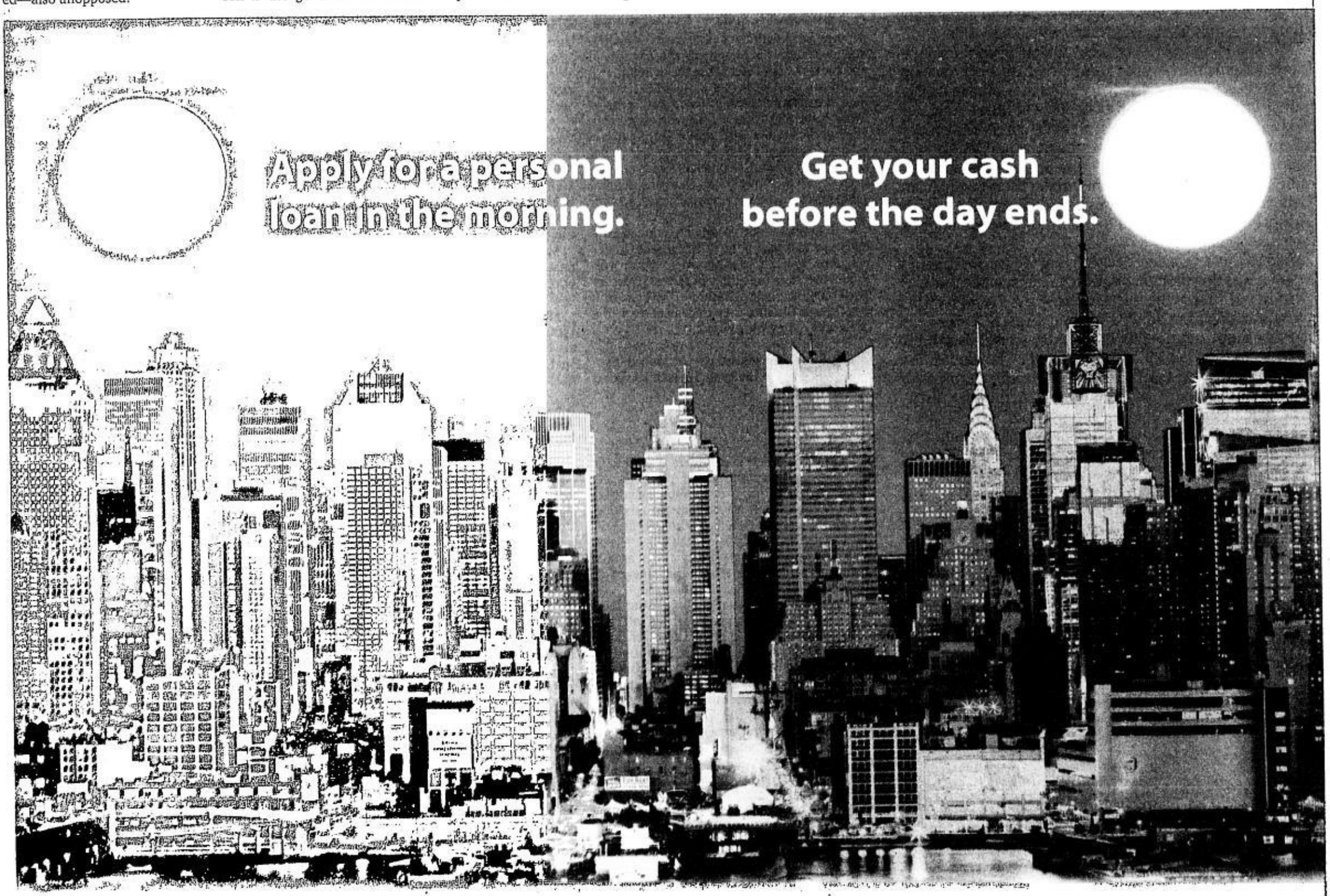
Ampatuan has given no thought to retiring yet. He says he might after another three-year term as governor, and go back to his farm.

A datu's wish

Most of all, Ampatuan says, he wants to be remembered as a good Muslim. One of his forefathers, Shariff Kabunsuan, was an Arab missionary who brought Islam to the southern Philippines in the 15th century.

Ampatuan's main home, a mansion on the highway from Shariff Aguak to nearby Cotabato City, has an air-conditioned mosque in the yard, which can accommodate more than 100 people.

Across the road are other large houses, belonging to his sons. *Reuters*



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FIRE PREVENTION MONTH'S MAIN COMMEMORATIVE activity was the burning to the ground of the Comelec building. Only in the Philippines!

An investigation, to be sure, has begun. We can only hope that it won't be yet another typically Philippine-style investigation—one that goes on and on until the public forgets about it, at which point it will be announced that it was all an innocent accident.

EDITORIAL

Innocence, of course, is the last word most citizens would use to characterize the Commission on Elections and its officials. But so far, everyone has been careful to avoid ascribing malice to the burning of a building condemned in 2000. The presence of a generator, and the conversion of the building's second floor into an ad hoc sleeping lounge, the presence of voluminous documents and evidence stored willy-nilly, all point to a conflagration waiting to happen. And it did.

Destroyed were documents and evidence concerning pending and past election protests from 1995 to 2004, allegations of unethical behavior and illegal or corrupt contracts entered into by Comelec officials, and most significantly, to our mind, verification reports submitted by Comelec field offices concerning the registration of party-list and other political parties for the 2007 elections.

The fire happened at a time when the Comelec and its preparations for the coming elections have revived public skepticism over how it is handling things. In 2004, the Comelec returned to what it was in 1984: a disgraced lapdog of the administration, and implicated in its questionable electoral activities. Up to now, it seems hell-bent on keeping itself devoid of credibility. Led by officials that no one may be willing to impeach, but whom no one quite trusts or even believes, it seemed impossible for the reputation of the Comelec to sink any lower. But think again.

This is why the destruction of verification reports concerning the party list concerns us the most. The party list may not occupy front and center in the average voter's mind, but the elections for those seats will be hotly contested. The Arroyo administration, for one, intends to prevent the election of leftist party-list representatives and elect a large number of its own. That's because the party list is a cheaper and manageable way to help secure the House of Representatives for President Macapagal-Arroyo, and thus keep her impeachment-proof. When the much-propagandized "machinery" of the administration kicks in, no one will be able to question the mushrooming of party lists successfully elected and allied with the President.

We should not, however, focus too much on the fire because it's only the latest in a series of disturbing developments. There was the discovery of three people in the National Printing Office, for example. The three unidentified (and unauthorized) men were caught in the process of copying the serial numbers of ballots and the municipalities and cities to which these were assigned. Such numbers are necessary for the preparation of duplicate ballots for cheating purposes, incidentally the kind of substitution in aid of fraud that only a well-oiled political machinery makes possible.

Add to this a Comelec decision that we warned against when it was first floated, but which seems to be most likely to happen now: the declaration of the President's pet party, Kampi, as the dominant minority party. This would entitle Kampi and not any other party (certainly not the parties in the opposition coalition, or the opposition coalition itself) to the fifth copy of election returns for senatorial and House elections (including the party list).

So when retired Comelec commissioner Mehol Sadain said he was joining a citizen's poll monitoring group, Halalang Marangal, because "I had a sense that cheating took place during the 2004 elections but I have no way of proving it because they took me out of Region 12," and that he felt in 2007 "anything could happen" because "the structure is still there," the public can only agree with his assumptions. First, of the flawed conduct of the 2004 polls, and second, that all the signs point to another flawed exercise this year.

Another member of Halalang Marangal points to Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane's decision to scrap reforms instituted by his predecessor. Avelino Cruz Jr. worked to have members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines freed from election duties. Ebdane has made it clear that the military will be "flexible" in the coming elections.

Where there's smoke, there's fire.

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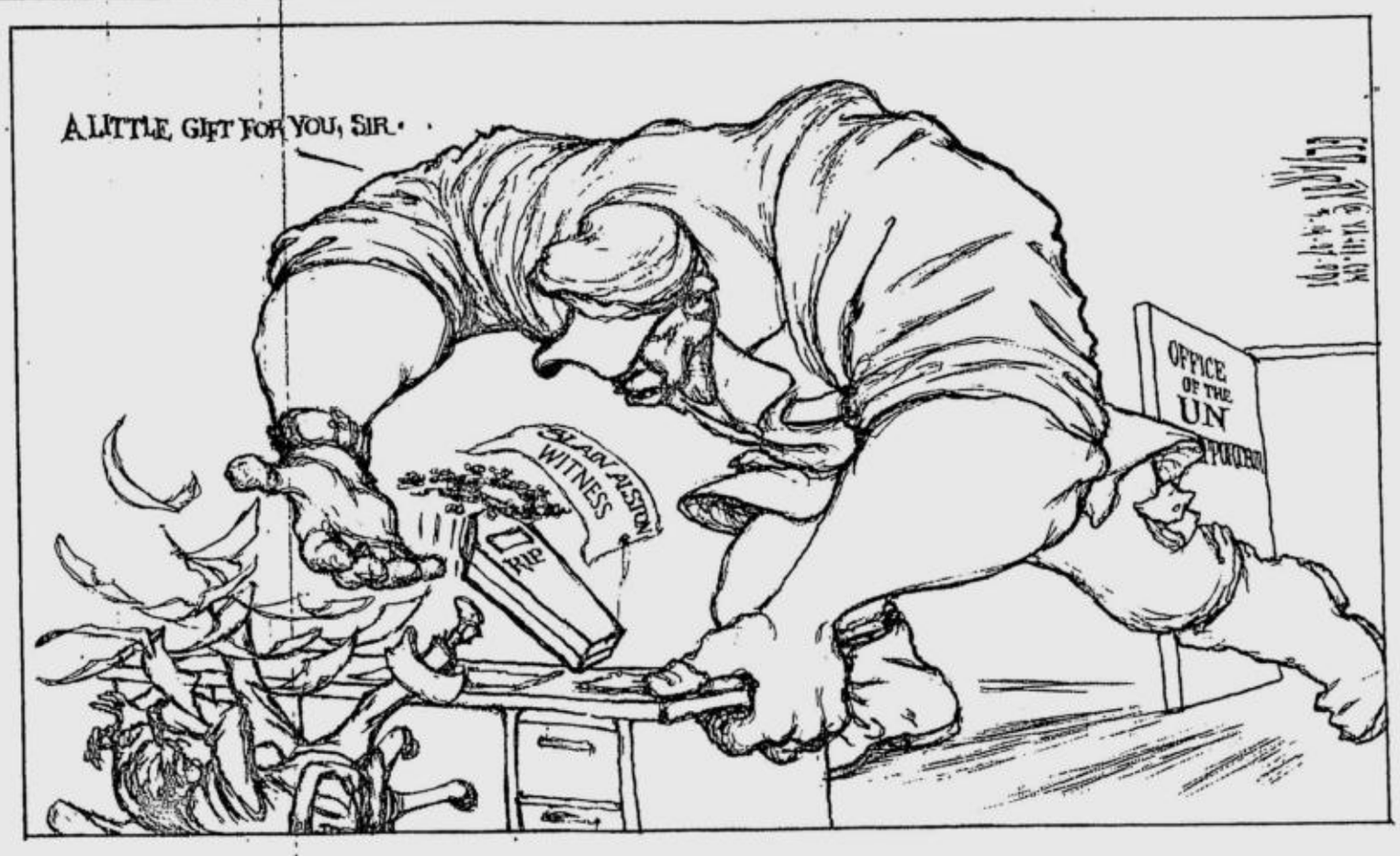


A fire waiting to happen

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THAT COMELEC BUILDING WAS FOR MANY years a fire waiting to happen. It was made of wood dating back to the Spanish regime and therefore very dry. Its rooms were full of papers and documents stacked from floor to ceiling. Electrical wiring snaked everywhere, a situation that any sensible electrician would not allow ordinarily. The wonder is that the building lasted this long.

Comelec officials are guilty of negligence for allowing such a dangerous situation to prevail for decades. The national government is likewise guilty of negligence for not providing the Comelec with another safer building. It spent plenty of money for non-urgent projects but not for the urgently needed Comelec building. The Bureau of Fire Protection and City Hall are also guilty of negligence for allowing the continued use of the building which was clearly a firetrap.

It was fortunate that nobody was hurt in the fire because it happened at night when there were no employees working. Had it happened during the day when the building was full of people, the casualties could have been numerous, considering how quickly the fire spread and the lack of fire escapes in the building.

But the most negligent of all were the firemen in the station literally just a stone's throw away from the Comelec. The fire station in front of the Manila Cathedral in Intramuros is separated only by one building, the Palacio del Gobernador, from the Comelec. A man can run from one to the other in less than one minute. Yet the firemen did not come to the rescue until the fire was out of control

If firemen cannot go quickly enough to a house on fire that is literally their next-door neighbor, how can we expect them to arrive on time when fires break out in faraway places? The Comelec people probably felt safe working in a firetrap because they were next-door to a fire station. They were wrong.

* * *

The fame and popularity of Manny Pacquiao has gone to his head. He is dead set on running for congressman of the first district of South Cotabato. The danger is that he may win. And then what? What will he do in the House of Representatives?

Good intentions are not enough in the House if one is to do his job. The purpose of a congressman is to write and propose bills and to guide those bills in the legislative mill.

But Pacquiao doesn't even know how a bill looks like, much less how to write one. He does not know parliamentary procedure to be able to shepherd bills through the House. What will happen to him during the interminable debates there? He does not know the ins and outs of the legislative process, even how to get a bill discussed and reported out by a committee. He would be lost. *Sayang lang ang* taxpayers' money that would be spent for him.

And alas, the people of South Cotabato would be badly represented. They should not vote for him; they should vote for Rep. Darlene Antonino-Custodio who ably represented South Cotabato for two terms. Just because Pacquiao beat two Mexican boxers doesn't mean he could do better than Custodio.

Manny needs to be knocked out soon to beat some sense into his head. For his own good.

* * *

More and more people are complaining about being refused rides by choosy taxicab drivers. A taxi franchise mandates drivers and operators to take passengers to their destinations. They cannot refuse rides to anybody. Yet many drivers still do this with impunity.

That is why the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) under its chair, retired Brig. Gen. Tomas Lantion, launched "Oplan Isnabero" recently. Among the first "*isnaberos*" caught were 10 taxi drivers who refused passengers at the Alabang Town Center. These drivers are now facing charges and their operators face the prospect of having their franchises canceled.

But Lantion's operation is being sabotaged by two of his own men. Two of the biggest and most established taxi companies in the country have complained that a high-ranking LTFRB lawyer and a consultant have teamed up to mulct taxi companies that have applied for franchises. They charge a P35,000 "facilitation fee" for each taxi franchise.

The activities of these two must be stopped and they should be removed from the LTFRB. Otherwise all the efforts of Lantion to reform the agency will be for naught.

* * *

The Lakas-Kampi rivalry may have spread collateral damage to innocent persons. A bar and restaurant operating at the Airport Casino Filipino in Parañaque was arbitrarily closed by Pagcor. The operator doesn't know why. Her efforts to get an explanation has been met by total silence.

Well, maybe this is a clue: Via Bellagio Restaurant, the closed casino bar and restaurant, is operated by Gina Lumauig, daughter of former Rep. Bert Lumauig of Ifugao. Lumauig is the spokesperson of Lakas-NUCD.

Via Belagio has almost 100 employees working three shifts a day as food attendants. By suddenly suspending the signing privileges of casino players patronizing it, Pagcor virtually cut off the lifeline of the restaurant. The employees suddenly found themselves jobless. The temporary restraining order issued by a Manila court was ignored by Pagcor.

Bakit naman po?

The idiot

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER NORBERTO Gonzales says the warrant of arrest issued against Satur Ocampo and the subsequent raid on his house are part of government's renewed crackdown against communist rebels after it failed to get them to put down their arms. "We're establishing the legal parameters ... that armed rebellion is no longer acceptable as a means of achieving political change," Gonzales said.

At the very least, what is idiotic about that statement is that it is Gonzales who is uttering it. Armed rebellion is no longer acceptable as a means of achieving political change? Pray, what is acceptable as a means of achieving political change? Lobbying the US government to change the Constitution of this country?

Lest we forget, that was what Gonzales did a couple of years ago. A contract signed by him committed the Philippine government to pay the American firm, Venable, a whopping $75,000 to lobby the American Congress to raise funds to help the Philippine government undertake Charter change. The scandalous nature of that undertaking did not escape the notice of the Senate which summoned Gonzales to explain it. He could not.

He could not explain why at a time when the government was claiming to be cash-strapped, it would pay an American firm a fortune to go on a PR binge for something so stupid. He could not explain if he took it upon himself to initiate the project or if he had the backing of his boss for it, sensing that he stood to earn the ire of the law if he admitted the first and of his boss if he admitted the second. (He admitted the first.) He could not explain why it did not occur to him as national security adviser that if the US Congress raised funds to change the Philippine Constitution it would want that charter changed in ways favorable to the United States, which would put Philippine sovereignty, not to speak of security, on the chopping block.

Allies would later defend the contract saying it was normal for governments around the globe to hire American lobbyists to persuade the US Congress to see things their way. True. But never to persuade the United States to meddle in their affairs, least of all to mess with their Constitution. The Venable contract was plain and simple treason.

The Senate hearing, chaired by Sen. Joker Arroyo, so reduced Gonzales to a frazzled state he had to beg off from further appearance on grounds of high blood pressure (it was not altogether clear whether he was referring to his condition or that of the public). But not before chomping on a banana, regaling his countrymen with a vivid image of where their country was going. Yet this banana-eating chump (I have no wish to be unkind to chimps) is not in jail for treason. He is in office with expanded powers for a job well done.

Well, it is no great surprise that he is. Look at the fundamental criterion for holding a position in this government. You are incapable of grasping the concept of justice, you become justice secretary. You are not voted president, you become president of this country. You put the security of this country in grave peril, you become the national security adviser.

At the very most, what is idiotic about Gonzales' justification for Ocampo's arrest, which is that government wants it known that it will no longer abide armed rebellion as a means for political change, is that it is self-contradictory. You grant that Ocampo was once a leader of the communist movement—and, unlike GMA, he is not on record exhorting someone to lie, cheat and steal, quite apart from murder, to become so, what is he doing precisely by running for public office but **rejecting** armed rebellion as a means for political change? What is he doing precisely but pursuing parliamentary means for political change, the most urgent task at hand being to remove a usurper which by itself would usher in a political sea change?

Of course, the government claims that Ocampo and the other leftist party-list representatives are merely using their position, apart from their funds, in Congress to foment armed struggle. That is a humongous charge that remains to be proven. Last I looked, this country still presumed people innocent until proven guilty. Last I looked, it even extended, or plain perverted, that proposition to keeping a usurper in power despite ironclad proof she stole the vote.

But far more than that, governments precisely urge rebel movements to take up parliamentary struggle so that they may give up their armed one—immediately or in time. There is no proof in the history of rebel movements that their armed component grows by leaps and bounds when some of their leaders, active or retired, join elections and win seats in Congress or Parliament. On the contrary, there is every proof that the armed component of rebel movements weakens and dies when some of their leaders do so.

Certainly there is ironclad proof that the armed component of a rebel movement grows into a sea when its attempts to pursue parliamentary struggle are met with repression. You don't have to look very far to see it. Shortly after the Japanese Occupation, several former Huk leaders joined the elections and six of them won seats in Congress. Government expelled them on trumped-up charges of cheating in the elections. They went back to the hills and mounted one of the fiercest rebel movements the world has known.

Gonzales' justification for persecuting Ocampo is idiotic. But we've reached a pass where the government no longer particularly cares whether it comes off as idiotic or not. The point is that it is able to get what it wants, this country not particularly caring to put up any resistance against idiocy. My question remains: When are we going to get angry at this? When are we going to feel the knife caressing our throats?

Who are the real idiots?

Corpses as trophies

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

IN OUR SYSTEM OF CHECK AND BALANCE, THE Supreme Court is not the executive department of government. Among the three departments, the Court, in practice, is the passive institution. Despite this, it put the executive branch to shame, when it was the first to implement one of the key recommendations of the Melo Commission on the extrajudicial executions: to set up special courts to try cases arising from these killings.

Chief Justice Reynato Puno jumped the gun on President Macapagal-Arroyo last month, when the Court issued Administrative Order 25-2007 designating nearly all the 99 trial courts across the country as special tribunals to try these cases, without the mealy mouthed prevarication and double talk of the President. The Court issued the order after the Melo Commission report recommended that the Department of Justice request the Supreme Court to designate special courts to hear and try cases on extrajudicial killings and to give them the highest priority.

The directive implemented the recommendation while President Arroyo was making noises about making it "a top priority to resolve the killings of political and agrarian activists and of members of the media and to prevent further killings."

Before the presidential saliva had dried, the Court directed the trial courts to hold "mandatory continuous trial (that) shall be terminated within 60 days" from commencement with "judgment (to) be rendered within 30 days from submission for decision."

The Court told the trial courts that "the speedy and expeditious resolution of these criminal cases deserve the highest concern of the judiciary, involving, as they do, the most brazen violations of human rights."

"The extrajudicial taking of life," Puno stressed, "is the ultimate violation of human rights. It cannot be allowed anywhere. Extrajudicial killings also constitute brazen assaults on the rule of law."

But even if the courts are willing work to expedite the trial of cases, nothing will move unless the prosecution arm of the justice department has the zeal and will of the courts. There is no evidence that the prosecution service has swung into action. The action that has taken place since the release of the Melo Commission's report is that of prosecutors busily digging up 20-year-old cases from the judicial archives and accusing leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front of the murder of a number of party members in an internal purge in the 1980s in Southern Leyte.

The immediate result of this priority of exhuming dead bodies and old files is that the prosecutors have come up with a resolution recommending the filing of multiple murder charges against Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, and other communist leaders. The state prosecutors displayed the wrong zeal and priority, in contravention of the priority set by the Puno directive and of the intentions of the Melo Commission. The commission blamed overzealous military army generals complying with orders from President Arroyo to crush the communist movement in two years. One of the commission's recommendations is to hold military commanders responsible for the deaths in their areas of command, under the doctrine of command responsibility.

There has been no movement from the executive department to implement the recommendation.

Under this "all-out war" policy, the security forces are bent on producing a body count of corpses as trophies to be presented to the President as proof of "mission accomplished." This body count method of assessing whether anti-insurgency campaigns are winning derives from the Vietnam War, when US troops fighting the Vietcong touted figures of enemy casualties to Pentagon. The body count was high, but the United States did not win the war.

So long as this body count syndrome drives the security forces, the toll of the counter-insurgency campaign is likely to rise. Corpses of non-combatants will continue to be discovered in lonely spots.

The security forces are not taking responsibility for the deaths as "enemy" casualties in combat. This is what makes the Philippine counter-insurgency campaign a more "dirty war" than the Vietnam War. It is an invisible war, but the casualties are visible. Also, the assailants are invisible. In the "dirty war" against leftist insurgents in Latin America in the 1970s, hundreds just disappeared in the pogroms launched by security forces.

Under attack from the UN rapporteur on human rights, Philip Alston, the European Commission and the US State Department over these killings, President Arroyo is dispatching Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo to a road show to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva and to Germany to attend the Asean-European Union ministerial meeting to proclaim the Philippines' "full commitment to human rights at home."

"As a country, the Philippines has shown full commitment to human rights at home and to cooperation with international human rights agencies." Romulo said. "We will lend this expertise to the deliberations of the new council."

Romulo will say this with a straight face. I am sure he will have much to offer as "expertise" in protecting human rights in the Philippines. He can offer the body count of extrajudicial murders in the Philippines as proof of how expert we are in producing corpses without holding anyone responsible for the deaths. Romulo will be like Hitler's SS chief, Himmler, protesting to the world the Nazi regime had nothing to do with the mass extermination of Jews at Auschwitz. The Nazis were "experts" in gas chamber executions. They recorded a higher body count than we have here.

Blood on the sugar

COMMENTARY

Denis Murphy

A GOVERNMENT SHOULD WORRY WHEN IT finds people like Florenda Helario, 48, and Erlinda Gregorio, 56, protesting at its gates. They are among the middle-aged sugar farmers' wives from Negros who have shaved their heads and have been on hunger strike since Feb. 20, protesting the failure of the Department of Agrarian Reform to install them on the land that is theirs through the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law.

They were on the 14th day of their fast and obviously weak when we met them last March 6. "If we are not talking to visitors, we sleep," Florenda told us. Their movements were slow. As we talked to Florenda, she rested her head in the lap of a young woman translating from Ilonggo.

What desperation caused these traditional rural women to shave their heads, go on a hunger strike and lie inside tents all day without any privacy?

"Are you hungry?" someone asks Florenda.

"*Gutom na gutom na talaga.*" She is silent for several seconds. "In the beginning it was headaches, now there are pains in my stomach."

"How long will you continue?"

"The secretary (of agrarian reform, Nasser Pangandaman) promised to install us this week (before March 10, that is). He gave no date."

"Do you believe him?"

"I will believe it when we are safe on our land."

"If he doesn't install you?"

"We will stay here. We will continue the fast."

"For how long?"

"We are ready to die," Florenda says quietly.

Erlinda nods in agreement. "We will die anyway, our men will not get work or they'll be shot," Florenda adds. "Don't we all die?"

On March 8, International Women's Day of all days, the agrarian reform secretary decided not to install them because, he said, forces organized by the plantation owner, Roberto J. Cuenca, threatened violence.

Florenda and Erlinda were sitting up when we talked, but the other women were lying on their cots watching us and listening. Somehow, due to the fasting and the shaved heads, they looked very much alike. They seemed to be one woman, who was a farm worker's wife and a grandmother, who has worked in the sugar fields since childhood, who has lived her whole life on one hacienda, on the land she now claims.

They earned P7 a day, which they gave to their mothers. "But it wasn't all hard work," Florenda remembers. "We had our *barkada*, dances and fiestas." She smiles at the memory.

The women have lived in the turmoil of the Negros sugar fields for 45 to 60 years. Hundreds of farm workers have been killed during that time. Their own president, Pepito Santillan, was shot dead in front of his wife and children this year.

If there is any taproot deep into Filipino culture, it is these women. For who better than they reflect the toil, patience, humanity and courage of the nation. For that reason, what happens now in front of the DAR in the tattered tents where the women rest is important to everyone, especially the government.

Whisky isn't the only thing the Irish have exported; the hunger strike is also theirs. In ancient Gaelic culture, even in pre-Christian days, the king or queen was compelled by custom and the moral sense of the people to listen with compassion to the hunger striker who lay at the gates of his or her castle and to do what was requested, provided it wasn't evil.

What will happen outside the DAR?

At one point Florenda prayed, "President GMA, please intervene."

Will society see the death of its own mothers?

The women's hacienda, Velez Malaga, was covered by land reform in 1996. By 2002, the workers had completed the necessary 27 steps to get their Certificates of Land Ownership. Each time they tried to take possession of the land, they were stopped by goons or "blue guards."

"We all go to be installed, men, women and children," Florenda said. "Two of us were wounded in January. Our leader was killed. I call on government to protect us."

President Ramon Magsaysay, when he was the defense secretary, and a small town judge demonstrated how people in authority can take care of problems of law enforcement in Negros. When his friend, Moises Padilla, was murdered by men of the governor in 1952, Magsaysay gathered soldiers and flew to Negros. He found Padilla's dead body in a police station and carried it out into the light where everyone could see it. He would say later, "When I carried the body of Moises Padilla in my arms, it was not the body of Padilla, but the body of the humble people of my country."

Magsaysay's men gathered enough evidence to arrest Gov. Rafael Lacson and eventually Lacson was sentenced to death. The judge in that case, Eduardo Enriquez, traced Lacson's rise to power, his private army, his "perfect and coordinated" system of political murder. Then the judge faltered. He recalled that he himself and Lacson had been college classmates: they had been "more than friends—like brothers." The judge began to tremble but managed to say: "However, circumstances arise when the loyalty of friendship must give way . . ."

With tears streaking down his cheeks, Enriquez then handed the decision over to the clerk to continue reading and sat back in his chair, sobbing. The clerk faltered over the sentence. The judge shouted for him to continue, and the clerk went on: for 22 defendants, including three mayors, three police chiefs and Lacson, death on the electric chair.

The title of this column "Blood on the sugar" is from the articles of a young, bright and eccentric American who spent months in the 1970s with the sugar workers of Negros. He disappeared without a trace a year or so after he wrote the articles.

Denis Murphy works with the Urban Poor Associates. His e-mail address is upa@pldtdsl.net.

The human side of war

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

SHORTLY AFTER THE OUTBREAK OF THE Philippine-American War, on or around Feb. 10, 1899, an order was drafted for Emilio Aguinaldo's signature containing 10 instructions for commanders and soldiers. Normally, such documents containing stale or obsolete information are consigned to the trash can, or if one wants to be ecological about it, converted into paper bags for use in the market as *pambalot ng tuyo*. For the historian, however, these century-old orders and circulars reflect the conditions of the time and, in this case, provide a rare glimpse into how the Philippine-American War was fought.

What caught my attention as I was browsing randomly through J.R.M. Taylor's five-volume compilation of documents, "The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States," were two detailed parts of the circular that had something to do with arms and ammunition. One provision recommended that: "All commanders shall carefully look after the soldiers of their commands at meals, and shall always enjoin them not to fire without first calculating the distance of the enemy" (to ensure that they will fire sure shots).

What does the above mean? That our soldiers just discharged their weapons to make noise? We are told that on the evening of Feb. 4, 1899, when the Philippine-American War began, all the generals were in Malolos attending a ball. What happened was that one shot led to another and there was a whole night of shooting. Yet when dawn broke, the casualties on either side did not seem to correspond to the ammunition expended.

Anong nangyari? Someone should tell us what really happened that night, but if we need any clues, this draft circular provides food for thought as it maintains that first shots fired are not warning shots, but shots made to see how far the enemy is:

"The first shots are sufficient to ascertain the range. I know that there are some still ordering or following the Spanish system, that is, firing often without causing damage to the enemy, and others who throw down ammunition to finish it soon and lead one to believe that they have done much firing, or to withdraw soon so that his comrades will not consider him a coward. These acts are a dishonor to the true defenders of Mother Philippines. While those men act very brave in time of peace with their Filipino brothers and the people of the town, the real revolutionaries, defenders of the fatherland, are those who see themselves humiliated and cast down because they now have their eyes opened and know what is true. They do not know how to offend their Filipino brothers and companions; they are not laboring for their own good, but for the tranquility of all the Philippines. Although they have much instruction, my poor brothers place no value on life, and when the country is in danger, they spontaneously present themselves and demand arms and bolos with which to defend it."

One reason the circular was never circulated was its very preachy tone. I wonder who drafted this and what was the context? The thought that our soldiers would actually throw away precious ammunition as an excuse to leave the battlefield is something that goes against everything we have been taught about the Revolution and the Philippine-American War. Why do we presume that everyone who fought then were heroes? People fought for various reasons, but did they all think of the nation? Furthermore, textbook history makes us often forget that our heroes were not bullet-proof, that they had little or no military training, that they had wives and children they wanted to return to, that they had other lives. Shouldn't we try and see the human side of the war?

There is a part of the circular that encourages a notion of fraternity among the troops. It made me wonder though if this isn't a given when you are fighting for your country. But then when you think of a variety of soldiers from different ethnolinguistic and cultural groups still trying to imagine a nation rather than regions, we can see that it is one thing to declare independence from Spain on June 12, 1898 in Kawit, and quite another matter to know what to do with that independence, how to nurture that independence and make a nation, not just a state. What struck me in this document was the idea of using knives:

"Every commander must give full liberty of action to his soldiers in battle in order that they may at once seize the most advantageous points for attacking the enemy and for preparing thus to deliver an attack with knives; everyone must keep a [constant] lookout, must have a thorough understanding with his neighbors and cooperate with them most cordially; they must not be alarmed by rifle fire; they must remember that this is nothing."

Does the above text indicate that some soldiers ran away as soon as they smelled gunpowder? Did they run away at the first crack of rifle fire? How could this circular counter the fear of battle? How could it even claim that bullets coming your way "is nothing"?

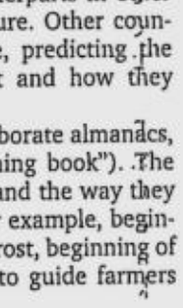
Original documents in our National Library not only give us the story of the struggle for freedom, but the details that make us understand and appreciate the past better.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Almanacs

PINOY KASI



Michael L. Tan

EVER HEARD OF DON HONORIO LOPEZ'S "KALENDARIong Tagalog"? It's an almanac that comes out annually, the 2007 edition being its 109th. A slim newsprint pamphlet of about 40 pages, it's a treasure trove of assorted information and, for social scientists, a way of looking into local culture.

Before doing the cultural analysis, let me walk you through the almanac's contents. The almanac's main section is the calendar. Looking at March 14 for example, we find out it's the feast day of Saints Leuvino, Florentina and Matilde.

The almanac also tells us that the previous day was the waning quarter moon (*pagliit sa alakdan*) and that by March 19, you'll have a new moon. March 19, as many of you already know, is the feast of San Jose (the Virgin Mary's Saint Joseph). The almanac also tells us that the day is the fiesta for San Jose del Monte, Bulakan; Baras, Rizal; Polilyo, Tayabas; Balanga and Kabkabin in Bataan.

Agrarian origins

If I might return to March 13, high tide today will be at 4:04 p.m. Are you thinking of agricultural activities? You may have to wait. March 11 would have been a good day for planting, while March 18 is your next good day for plowing the fields. (I take it "*pagararo*" is meant strictly in its agricultural sense, although it can also have other less land-based meanings.)

The list of auspicious days for planting and plowing are said to apply as well to fishing, meaning if you want to seed your fishponds, you look for the good days for planting.

This almanac, like so many of its counterparts in other countries, clearly has its roots in agriculture. Other countries' almanacs are much more elaborate, predicting the weather, suggesting what crops to plant and how they should be planted.

The Chinese probably have the most elaborate almanacs, which they call "Tong Shu" (the "everything book"). The books follow both the sun and the moon and the way they usher in different parts of the seasons (for example, beginning of the spring, beginning of the small frost, beginning of the great frost). These descriptions help to guide farmers with their planting activities.

The Chinese almanacs also have extensive advice on what you can or can't do on a certain day, from opening a new business, to getting a haircut, to cleaning the grave sites of relatives. It also tells you if the day will be good, or bad, for certain people, depending on their year of birth (e.g., the year of the dog).

As if all that were not enough, "Tong Shu" has amulets printed inside, which you can use to deflect bad *feng shui*, or attract good luck.

The Chinese almanacs are taken fairly seriously, with thousands upon thousands of copies, produced by different people, being sold each year. Even the television channels in Hong Kong and Taiwan will feature Tong Shu advice for the day and, in a modern twist, that will include whether it's a good day to buy stocks or not.

Heroes, jerks

Almanacs clearly work on the psyche. On one hand, it helps to give some certainty to an uncertain world. Some people just need to be able to feel they're setting out in the right direction for the day. One can understand why this was so important for farmers, given nature's vagaries. Simply knowing the movements from one season's phase to another probably gives order and meaning to farmers' lives.

One would have expected that with all the advances of technology today, almanacs would have gone out of fashion, but for the Chinese at least, even the most modernized, the almanacs are still important. I suspect the most avid followers are business people, given the high risks that they take. And I worry, at times, about how people develop a dependency on the almanacs, to the point of paranoia about possible misfortune.

"Kalendariong Tagalog" is more restrained, but it still reflects our need for some degree of control over nature, over our lives. The lunar cycles and the high tides are clearly for agriculture and fisheries. But in addition, there's a strong dose of Western astrology in here. Thus, before the entry for Feb. 21, "Kalendariong Tagalog" tells us we are entering Pisces. Males born on this date, the almanac predicts, will be happy and hard-working, and will get rich in their old age. In their being daring and in their loquaciousness, they will have more than their share of ill feelings (presumably generated in others). After that long discussion of the Pisces male, we find that a Pisces female should just harbor pleasant ("*magandang*") feelings and thoughts toward her spouse.

There's more. The almanac has a whole section preparing women for their husbands, depending on what their astrological sign is. I learned, I hope not belatedly, that male Geminis need to feel free and unshackled. And advice for women who marry such creatures? Just consider them friends, take good care of them and remain faithful.

Gender-sensitive the almanac is not. There is no section describing women by their astrological signs, and what their husbands need to do to keep their marriage happy. Presumably, women have to adjust to the jerks they married.

But I have to say the almanac sort of redeems itself by being nationalistic. Besides listing saints and fiestas, they have some historical information as well. The cover of the almanac, in fact, has a kind of secular pantheon of Filipino heroes: I was able to identify Rizal at the center, surrounded by Burgos (the priest), Del Pilar, Bonifacio, Mabini and Lopez-Jaena.

Yes, all male. But hey, you can't be perfect here. I did appreciate Don Honorio's nationalism. For March 19, we find this citation: "When Magallanes arrived in the Archipelago we had our own government, faith, laws, etc. 1521." Not bad, huh? (A recent lecture from historian Zeus Salazar was a bit more blunt: What did Magellan do in 1521 except to get himself killed by Lapu-lapu?)

For those who are interested, you'll find birthdays of national heroes and of presidents. Note how I separated the two categories.

It would be wonderful if we could see expanded almanacs. Maybe when I retire, I'll work on one. It will have lists upon lists, of Pinoy inventions and discoveries, of the arcane and the strange (like that bridge in Bohol that they kept building until they realized it was going to run into a church), and of course it will have all kinds of practical information, including recipes upon recipes for medicinal plants.

Where to get the almanac? You can buy them direct from the publishers at 152 Scout Gandia in Kamuning, Quezon City, or pick up one in Quiapo from the amulet vendors. While you're in Quiapo, you might as well ask the vendors for their amazing spells and charms for dealing with feckless good-for-nothing husbands or partners. Enough with suffering women having to be the ones to look up the time when high tide comes in.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Why a settlement on cases already won?

THIS IS IN REACTION TO A NEWS ITEM ON the coco levy, which was published last March 3.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government should be upholding the judicial victories of the small coconut farmers. Instead, PCGG Chair Camilo Sabio has been railroading a compromise agreement involving the coconut levy cases. By doing so, Sabio is practically conceding that the coco levy is a private fund. This runs contrary to the rulings issued by the Supreme Court and the Sandiganbayan, both of which affirmed the public character of the fund.

There are three probable scenarios under the proposed compromise agreement. All three put us (small coconut farmers) and the government at a gross disadvantage. First, Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco will no longer contest the 27 percent SMC-CIIF block of shares awarded by the Sandiganbayan to the government "in trust" for all coconut farmers. In exchange, he will be able to maintain his hold on the remaining 20 percent, even though the courts have already ordered that a trial on this issue be started immediately.

Second, on top of the first scenario, all charges, whether civil or criminal, will be withdrawn by the PCGG and Office of the Solicitor General, leaving the perpetrators of the coco levy scam scot-free.

Third, the settlement will identify Cocofed as the primary beneficiary of a foundation to be established as the mechanism for the use of coco levy funds. It will be ironic because Cocofed has already lost its claim over the 27 percent SMC-CIIF block of shares as ruled by the Sandiganbayan. And now here come Cojuangco and Cocofed entering into an amicable settlement for a case they already lost, maneuvering to become the primary beneficiaries. The integrity of the farmers' groups that will readily benefit from the formation of the foundation is also highly suspect, as these have been identified with Cojuangco.

The proposed out-of-court settlement is not at all amicable as it only favors Cojuangco, Cocofed and their supporters. It seems like Cojuangco is actually dictating the substance and content of the purported compromise agreement. Why include the 27 percent SMC-CIIF block of shares in the global compromise agreement when the small coconut farmers and the government already have won the case? If such an arrangement is allowed by government, then justice will again elude us, coconut farmers.

—JUN ADORABLE,
Alyansa sa mga Maglulubi sa Mindanaw,
alyansa_maglulubi@yahoo.com.ph

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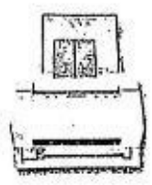
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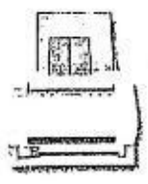
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No regrets at offering his services to Bulakeños

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO MARCIAL PIMENTEL's letter which appeared in the Feb. 22 issue of the INQUIRER. To dissuade Manny Pacquiao from entering politics, Pimentel cited my father, the late Bert "Tawa" Marcelo, as an example.

Allow me to correct some points he raised in the letter. As reported in all newspapers in 1995, including the INQUIRER, my father died in Quezon City and not in the United States. He died due to a congenital stroke that was in no way connected to "self-pity and regret" which Pimentel claimed was brought about by his loss in the local elections.

Also, my father invested his income well, in businesses and real estate; he spent only a portion of it for his gubernatorial bid. He considered the campaign as the best education one could ever have in economics, sociology and politics. He never regretted offering his services to his province mates. These were all documented in news reports and columns that appeared after his death.

Pimentel, a veteran politician, wrote the inaccuracies and lies as if these were gospel truth. This is precisely the reason why my father entered politics: he wanted to bring honor and dignity to the position he aspired for, two significant qualities which—sadly for us taxpayers—are lacking in today's politicians.

—BARRY C. MARCELO,
22 Valiant St.,
Fairview Park, Quezon City

US' double standard on extrajudicial killings

THE UNITED STATES SHOULD STOP TELLing the Philippine government how to deal with the so-called "extrajudicial" killings. The ragtag New People's Army is an internal threat only to the security of the Philippines, not to the security of the Americans.

The United States wants us to get involved in its war against al-Qaida and its clones, and heaps us with praises whenever our military scores against Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah terrorists. The reason is obvious. The United States does not want the terrorists to spill over to its land; and the better option is to nip these elements in the bud before they can even rear their ugly heads. The United States does not care how many terrorist suspects are killed and in what fashion they are eliminated.

Yet, when it comes to casualties resulting from the government's campaign against the NPA, the United States pretends to be the guardian of human rights. In what seemed like an irony of ironies, it lent its ears more to the NPA's legal fronts than to the Philippine military. A classic example is the recent Alston report which pins the blame for the extrajudicial killings on the Armed Forces of the Philippines, while saying nothing about NPA atrocities. It is even absurd that the Moro Islamic Liberation Front is jubilant over the Alston verdict and joins the communist fronts and the United Nation's special rapporteur in criticizing the Philippine government for its allegedly lackadaisical attitude toward the extrajudicial killings in the Philippines.

We have seen the two faces of the United States. Unfortunately, we cannot do anything about it because we are weak and inconsequential to US' realpolitik.

Unfortunately, too, we need the United States more than it needs us. In the fight against terrorists, especially against the Jemaah Islamiyah, US assistance is vital to us. Our southern corridor is so vast such that our Philippine Navy can hardly monitor effectively a kilometer of our beach line. JI elements from Indonesia surreptitiously enter our territories to replenish their forces as quickly as our military can eliminate them.

If the US government wants to truly help our country, it might as well provide our Navy with watercraft that can pursue terrorists at sea and deal with them before they reach our shores—and ultimately establish "beachheads" in the United States.

—EDGAR PALMA,
edpalma1960@yahoo.com

MLQ III thanked for 'reminder' on McCarthyism

ALLOW ME TO THANK MANUEL L. QUEZON III for his column "A year of murder." (INQUIRER, 2/26/07)

I thank him for reminding all of us that Redbaiting and McCarthyism should not have a place in Philippine society. I thank him for standing up in defense of basic human rights. Most of all, I thank him for writing with the sensibility of a poet.

—JOI BARRIOS-LEBLANC, Ph.D.,
4 Wakefield Avenue, Apt. 1,
Wakefield, MA 01880

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Propaganda war between AFP and Reds

IT IS NOT UNUSUAL TO HEAR MILITANT organizations lashing out at the government, as well as at the military and police. Most of these groups are legal political fronts of the communists who have not abandoned their goal of bringing down our democratic government by force. Even as their ideology has become irrelevant, they keep its flame burning because for most of their leaders, this is their only way to survive.

For example, exiled supremo and master propagandist of the New People's Army, Jose Maria Sison, has to fan the embers of insurgency back home so he can sustain his lifestyle in Europe. His followers have been quick to learn his lessons; they have become more creative and efficient—even more aggressive in challenging the authorities, not only in warfare but also in propaganda. Recently, they successfully brought to international attention the issue of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines. As if that were not enough, they cajoled UN special rapporteur Philip Alston to give their complaints more credence and space in his reports.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines was visibly jolted by the Alston report. But the AFP has nobody to blame but itself for failing to immediately address the killings. It also lost in the propaganda war, which the communists and their legal fronts have mastered.

Of late, however, the defense establishment has been dealing with the New People's Army with greater resolve. It intensified its counter-propaganda efforts. It fielded units in suspected communist lairs. So it was but natural for the communists to raise the volume of their propaganda, branding the AFP's community-based programs as "*militarisasyon*." The militants will continue harping on this issue and may also bring this to Alston's attention.

On the other hand, the AFP seems to have caught up with the CPP-NPA, making a successful counter-propaganda campaign, overrunning enemy territories and discovering not only munitions factory but also volumes of communist propaganda materials (taken from party-list groups associated with the movement).

Now the playing field is even. The militants will carp even more at the strategies of the AFP. But it now depends on the AFP if it will yield to the pressure of the militants and politicians.

—MENARDO WENCESLAO,
mewenceslao@yahoo.com

Roxas sees passport shortage in June due to TRO

By Dona Pazzibugan and Cynthia D. Balana

THE COUNTRY FACES A PASSPORT SHORtage by June unless the Supreme Court lifts a restraining order issued by a lower court against a passport modernization project of the Department of Foreign Affairs, according to Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II.

He warned that the two-year-old court battle that has reached the high court had derailed the DFA's acquisition of so-called e-passports that comply with new international travel standards.

The current passports are still handwritten and manually processed.

"Outdated as our passports are compared to the rest of the world, what is worse is a looming crisis where none of the Filipino travelers can avail of a passport," Roxas said.

"Once the supply of passports runs out and unless there is a way to go around the legal skirmishes, the constitutional right to travel of thousands of Filipinos and our overseas workers could be seriously impaired," he added.

Worst case scenario

In a press briefing yesterday, Assistant Secretary Domingo Lucenario of the Office of Consular Affairs said the DFA was preparing contingency plans "should the worse case scenario happen."

"[Because] whatever is the decision of the judicial system, we have to respect that," Lucinario said.

However, she expressed confidence that the legal obstacles would be removed by June. "We are hoping the Supreme Court will look into our case with the national interest in mind," she said.

On March 6, the DFA appealed before the high court the decision issued by the Pasig regional trial court preventing the DFA and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, which issues passport paper, from proceeding with the e-passport project.

A private firm called the BCA International Corp. had succeeded in getting an injunction against the project citing its previous build-operate-transfer (BOT) agreement with the DFA in 2001 to implement a machine-readable passport/visa project (MRP/V) project.

The DFA, however, later questioned the capability of BCA and its project company, Philpass to implement the project and terminated the BOT agreement in 2005.

The DFA also told the high court that the new passports it ordered from the BSP would contain state-of-the-art contactless integrated circuit (IC) chip, making its e-passport project different from the MRP/V project.

DFA officials had earlier warned that the country's passport supply would last only up to June, and the supply may not be immediately replenished since the procurement process takes at least seven months.

The DFA receives 7,000 to 8,000 applications for passports every day, Consular Affairs records showed.

Roxas appealed to the Supreme Court to immediately act on a pending petition filed by the DFA and prevent a possible passport crisis.

"This legal battle stands in the way of our national dignity, with Filipino tourists and overseas workers having to suffer the embarrassment of extraordinary scrutiny in all major international airports because of our primitive passports," Roxas said.

He said it was ironic that the country was still using "primitive" passports that do not meet new international travel standards when it had recently passed an antiterrorism law.

He said the Philippines was the only country in Asia without a machine-readable passport that could help the government monitor movements of suspected terrorists.

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GMA blames 'opposition,' her unpopularity for negative image

From page A1

than let the economy perish."

Ms Arroyo said businessmen themselves found the Philippines to be a competitive economy.

Asked if things were looking up for the Philippines, she said: "Well, I would say, and many businessmen have told me this, they have never seen the economy as good as it is now."

Major problem

Representatives of the country's business elite conceded that corruption remained a major problem, but disputed the PERC finding that the Philippines was perceived to be the most corrupt in Asia.

Alberto Lim, Makati Business Club (MBC) executive director, said that, in some cases, corruption was easing.

"For example, we are closely monitoring the case of ghost deliveries of textbooks [in the public school system]," he said, referring to earlier findings which revealed a 40-percent rate of nondelivery. "That [problem] has gone away."

Lim said the results of the PERC survey were likely the perception of foreign businessmen on the local situation, which has been punctuated by several high-profile corruption cases.

No big fish caught

The MBC is the umbrella organization of the country's largest corporations and has, in the past, taken controversial positions, like asking for the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo in 2005.

"I think what [the PERC survey respondents] are saying is that we haven't been catching the big fish," he said.

For his part, Leonilo Coronel, Bankers Association of the Philippines executive director, said foreign businessmen may have made conclusions based on certain high-profile corruption cases.

'Very old news'

"Corruption is endemic all around Asia. It's just that there have been cases here in the limelight like the Piatco case," he said, referring to the controversy surrounding the Ninoy Aquino International Airport's Terminal 3 building. "Admittedly, that stinks."

Coronel said the experience on the ground was different from the perception of businessmen abroad.

"What's their basis for saying we're the most corrupt in Asia?" he said.

Other business groups decried the results of the PERC survey.

"I resent anything that is coming from this group (PERC)," said Donald G. Dee, chair of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Gun shy

"Their basis is very old news," Dee said, referring to PERC's citing the protracted corruption trial of deposed President Joseph Estrada as "an example of the problem and probably explains why respondents to our survey were so negative in their assessment."

Dee, a special envoy for trade negotiations, said PERC was giving the impression that doing business in the Philippines involved a payoff.

"These kinds of comments have made us too careful. We can't even move," he said. "The government has become gun shy in proceeding with reforms."

He said that the privatization of National Transmission Corp.'s assets had dragged on because the government was careful about possible accusation of corruption.

"With public and competitive bidding having failed four times, the concession should have been awarded by now (through negotiation)," he added.

The Semiconductor and Electronics Industries of the Philippines also did not agree with the results of the PERC survey.

"We are not experiencing (corruption), in general," said Ernie Santiago, Seipi executive director.

"Our members are global firms, and they would not allow that to happen," Santiago said.

Growing corruption a threat to RP, Thailand

HONG KONG—THE THREAT posed by corruption in Asia is growing, particularly in Thailand and the Philippines, and that could lead to further re-pricing of investment risk in the region, a Hong Kong think tank said on Tuesday.

Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC), in an annual survey, also said corruption was still considered high in China and India although it was perceived as less serious in those two booming economies than a year ago.

"A fundamental shift in sentiment could be under way that is re-pricing risk in developed and developing economies," PERC said.

"One of the reasons for this re-pricing is corruption. It has contributed to the under-pricing of risk and now is contributing to the correction."

It said risk premiums between emerging markets and developed markets probably should be narrowing, reflected by the global sell-off in equities markets in the past few weeks.

The group noted that the selling was partly triggered by a nosedive in China's stock markets after a crackdown on corruption in Shanghai.

Banks and other state-owned companies in China, Thailand and other emerging markets had been made to look healthier than they were, the survey said.

"As is now being seen from the corruption crackdown in Shanghai, many of that city's most prominent companies got the contracts they did and were allowed to "shine" precisely because they were working in cahoots with local politicians and bureaucrats bent on lining their own pockets. And China has not been the only country where this has happened," it said. *Reuters*

Zuño to speed up probe of GMA 7 asset's killing

From page A1

walk-in complainant ... who volunteered to observe the goings-on in this Pasig community. We have shared details regarding the circumstances of Colisao's involvement with GMA with the Department of Justice and the police."

Named respondents in the murder case pending with the DOJ were Amin Imam Boratong, alleged operator of the P900-million Pasig shabu market demolished by the police last year, his wife Memie, PO2 Ramil Along and Nashir Labay.

Police said Colisao was killed on Nov. 17, 2005, his body dumped in a Pasig street. It bore three gunshot wounds.

The murder case was filed with the DOJ in July last year, or eight months later. It is still pending at the department.

Colisao's family has expressed concern over what it felt was a slow progress of the case but Zuño said this was because he had the case reviewed by another prosecutor.

Zuño said he would see to it that the review was finished soon.

Under police noses

The discovery of the shabu market—located near a police station—shocked people because it showed how openly shabu was being sold, almost under the very noses of the police.

The murder case against Boratong and the others was filed by the main police witness, Samer Palao, who is said to be Boratong's brother and associate.

Palao, who denies kinship with Boratong, is himself facing a murder case filed by the Boratong couple.

Boratong's lawyer has said the case was based on flimsy evidence because it came from a polluted source, meaning, Palao.

In filing the case, Palao claimed he was privy to what really happened to Colisao.

Blindfolded and beaten

In his complaint, Palao said he, Boratong and Memie were in an Ortigas Mall on Nov. 14, 2005 when they received a phone call from someone informing them that a media asset had been caught with a spy cam.

They immediately went back to the Boratongs' Pasig house, called, "Malacañang," where Palao claimed he saw a blindfolded Colisao being beaten.

Three days later, Colisao was brought out of the compound by Boratong's men, who were ordered "to kill the asset because he might escape," Palao further alleged.

Colisao's body was found later on Urbano Avenue in Pasig.

Looking for Colisao

One of the documents the police gave the INQUIRER was a purported letter from a GMA 7 "researcher" on Nov. 15—the day after Palao said he saw the blindfolded Colisao—asking for police help in locating Colisao.

The letter bore a logo of the TV network and was signed by "Israel del Mundo, Researcher."

"We would like to request from your good office to extend your helping hand in looking [for] Mr. Colisao," the letter said. It also asked the police for the issuance of a "Certificate of Loss of Spy Cam Bag."

Next Colombia?

Yesterday, an anticrime watchdog group staged a picket at the lot where the shabu market used to stand and lambasted the administration for what they said were half-hearted efforts to pursue the case against Boratong.

Members of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) unveiled banners reading, "Pasig City *Malapit na Maging Colombia* (About to Become Another Colombia)," a reference to the largest producer of cocaine in the world.

"What we fear most is the strong possibility that Palao may be liquidated since he is the lone witness against Boratong. This would be a disaster beyond measure," VACC founding chair Dante Jimenez said.

VACC said the Boratong case would prove if the government was sincere in eradicating illegal drugs in the country. *With reports from Alcuin Papa, Kristine L. Alave and Santiago R. Alcantara*

Bomb suspect arrested; explosives seized

COTABATO CITY—Government security forces arrested a suspected bomber and seized explosives in a raid in Shariff Kabunsuan province yesterday.

The suspect, identified as Acmad Saludin, was collared inside a house in Barangay Tambo in Sultan Mastura town, said Maj. Randolf Cabangbang, spokesperson of the military's Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom).

"He did not resist arrest," Cabangbang said.

Soldiers of the 603rd Infantry Brigade led by Col. Paternal Morales stormed Saludin's hideout at around 2:45 a.m.

Seized were two improvised explosive devices, a cell phone, two shells for an antitank weapon, and an electrical tester, Cabangbang.

He said Saludin was an associate of Basit Usman, an alleged Jemaah Islamiyah member who was said to be behind the recent bombings in Central Mindanao. Usman is in Washington's list of terrorists and carries a bounty of $50,000 (P2.4 million).

Usman is said to be a former member of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) but the MILF has disowned him. He is being blamed for the bomb attacks that killed eight people and wounded dozens of others, including that in Makilala, North Cotabato, in October.

On March 5, policemen shot dead a suspected bomber while he was trying to escape from their custody in Datu Saudi Ampatuan town.

Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, police director of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, identified the suspect as Butiok Ali, 22, an alleged MILF bomb expert, who was arrested earlier that day.

Goltiao said Ali was implicated in the 2002 explosion in Datu Piang town that killed then Mayor Saudi Ampatuan and several others.

"Two of his companions, who were planning to stage attack in Datu Saudi town managed to escape before the raid. He was brought to the police station and he tried to grab the firearm of one of the arresting officers," Goltiao said. *Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao*

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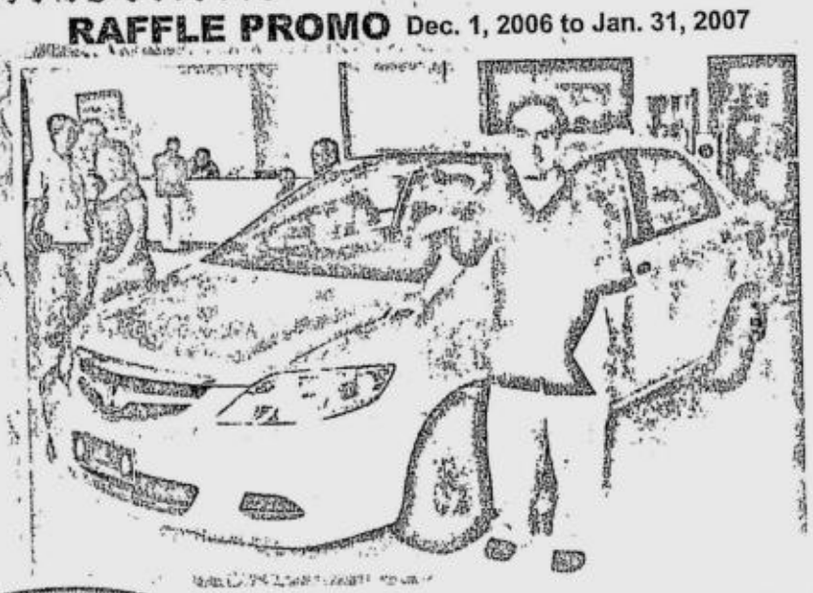

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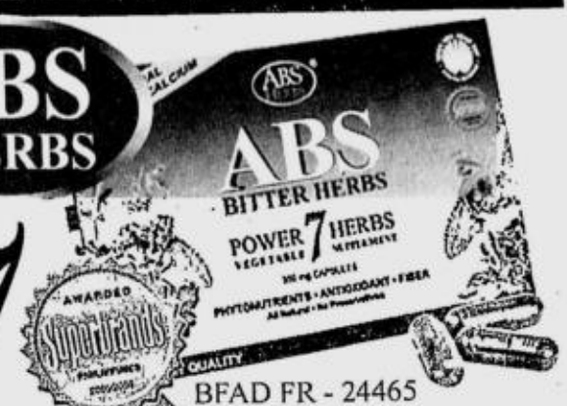

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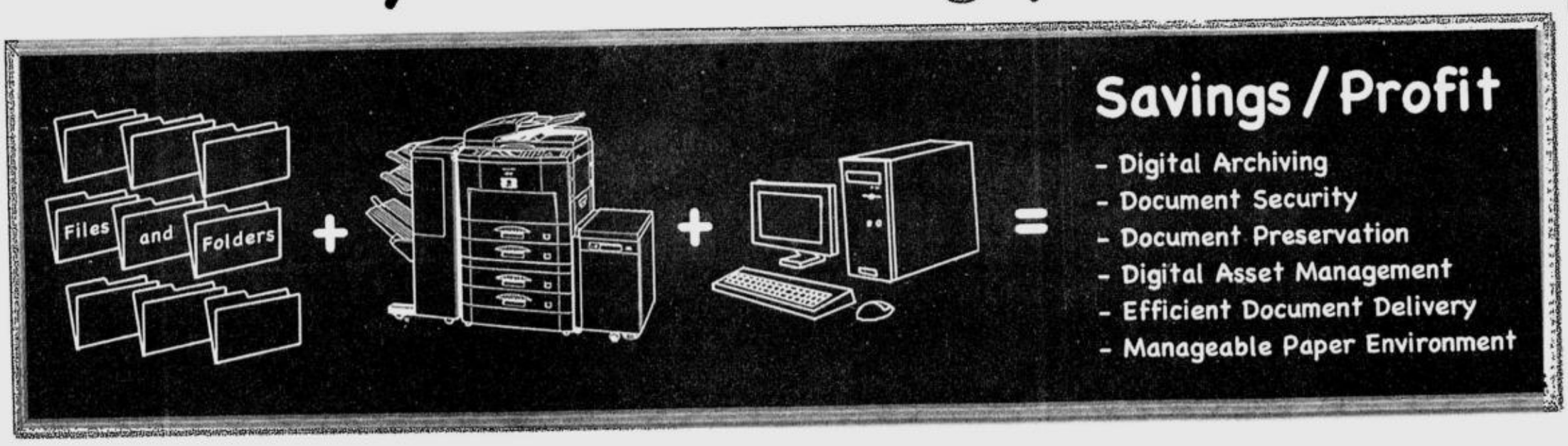

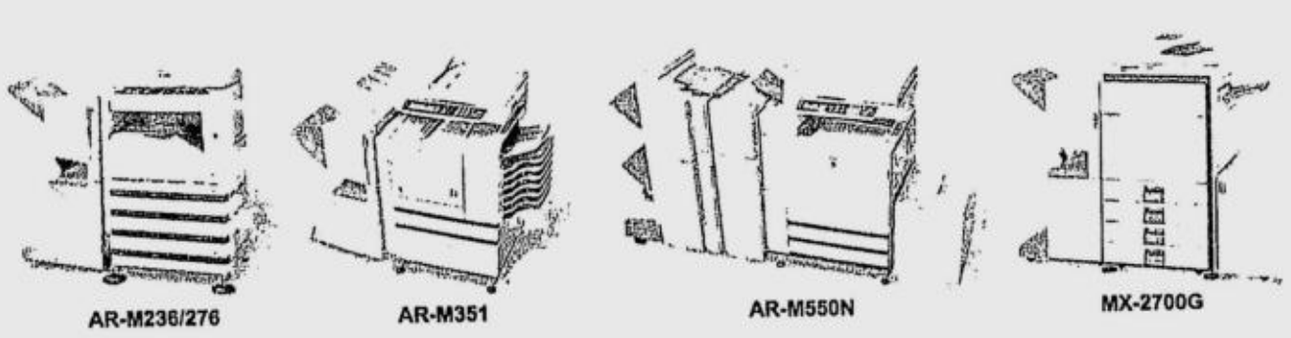

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PAGC chief: Palace sitting on 21 graft cases

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING its best to go after "big fish and small fry," the head of the government's anticorruption body said.

Constancia de Guzman, chair of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC), claimed that Malacañang was not sitting on most corruption cases involving its own officials, saying that "we have measurable accomplishments to show" and "statistics to count."

She, however, virtually admitted that the Palace was sitting on at least 21 cases that the PAGC had submitted to the Office of the President—eight cases in 2006, eight cases last January and five cases last month.

Without naming names due to the confidential nature of the investigations, De Guzman said the PAGC had recommended "punitive sanctions" against corrupt officials of the administration, including a Cabinet member.

The rest were all line agency heads and other ranking government officials, she said.

The PAGC recommendations, which ranged from dismissal to suspension, had been forwarded to the office of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

"People look for convictions. They want to see someone behind bars ... although there's improvement in the preventive measures and education component and strategic partnership," she said.

De Guzman said the PAGC had to go through the lengthy investigation process to avoid reversal of its decisions by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The unacted cases also included the case of National Printing Office Director Felipe Evardone, who has been allowed by the Palace to go on leave pending the outcome of a review being conducted by the Office of the President through the Office of the Executive Secretary's legal department.

In cases where both the PAGC and Office of the President disagree on the findings, the President will be called upon to make the final ruling.

De Guzman said the PERC survey and that of the Social Weather Stations relied on old data and selectively picked out the "negative" but set aside the "positive developments" in the government's anticorruption drive.

RP 'most corrupt' in Asia

From page A1

country in 2006.

PERC said it had not noted a worsening in the actual situation in the Philippines despite its deteriorating score.

"It is bad and has been bad all along. People are just growing tired of the inaction and insincerity of leading officials when they promise to fight corruption," it said.

When asked by PERC to assess how serious the corruption problem in the public sector was, Philippine-based foreign entrepreneurs gave an average score of nine.

Private sector good

Perceived corruption in the private sector was not as bad, however.

Aside from asking the expatriates to grade corruption in the public and private sectors, PERC had them assess the effectiveness of the judiciary in fighting corruption and the tolerance of average citizens toward corruption.

In a phone interview from Hong Kong, PERC managing director Robert Broadfoot said: "Respondents gave the private sector a score of 4.15, which is quite good."

The interviewees were mostly Western businessmen and were in the trading, banking and manufacturing industries.

When PERC noticed the discrepancy between the distrust levels for the public and private sectors, it asked other expatriates, "major" Filipino businessmen and universities to explain why the respondents gave the public sector a bad rating, Broadfoot said.

Estrada trial, raps vs GMA

"Cited were unresolved cases like the corruption trial of deposed President Joseph Estrada. The case has been dragging on for years. Then there's the opposition's [corruption and electoral fraud] charges against President Macapagal-Arroyo," Broadfoot told the INQUIRER.

Estrada was put on trial for plunder after he was ousted in 2001. He was charged with plunder for allegedly amassing some P4 billion in payoffs from illegal gambling operations, tobacco tax kickbacks and commissions.

Calls from various sectors, including the Church, that Ms Arroyo be investigated for allegedly cheating in the 2004 presidential election remain unheeded after impeachment complaints against her were defeated in the House of Represenatives twice—in 2005 and 2006.

Inappropriate to compare

Broadfoot said credible corruption trials could convince businessmen that the Philippines was serious about fighting corruption.

The PERC managing director, however, said it might be inappropriate to compare the Philippines' corruption rating with that of other Asian countries.

"The Philippines' score was based only on interviews of expatriates in the country. [PERC] did not ask a single group of expatriates to give scores to all Asian countries," he said.

Broadfoot said it would be better to compare the Philippines' current corruption rating with its previous scores.

Singapore and Hong Kong were seen as the cleanest economies, while China, Indonesia and Vietnam posted improvements, said PERC.

Thai junta

The perception of corruption in Thailand worsened, with the military junta now in power after last September's coup seen as being little better than the government it ousted.

Thailand and Indonesia, both with a grade of 8.03, shared the spot as Asia's second most corrupt nations.

The junta that ousted Thaksin Shinawatra as Thailand's prime minister last year promised to fight corruption "but there is no reason to be confident that its behavior will be any cleaner," PERC said.

On Indonesia, PERC said President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's campaign to crack down on corruption had "produced some positive results, but he is still swimming against the current."

The rankings of the 13 economies put Malaysia in the middle, marginally worse than last year.

"One of the big disappointments for many Malaysians is that Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has not been able or willing to follow through effectively with his campaign promise to reduce corruption," PERC said.

Media censorship in China

China and Vietnam bettered their scores, but PERC said that the improved perception was because corruption was not being discussed openly.

"The media in both China and Vietnam are subject to tight censorship. The only bad news the governments want published is news that they see fit for public consumption," it said.

China was the seventh most corrupt nation, according to the survey, up two places from last year. Vietnam was in 10th place out of 13, also up two places.

India was in ninth place. PERC said the Indian government must accelerate reforms, warning that corruption could limit companies' expansion plans.

Singapore again just beat regional rival Hong Kong as the cleanest economy, although the latter posted a sharp improvement from its image in 2006.

This may have resulted from a perception that "the differences between Hong Kong and (mainland) China are even starker now," Broadfoot said.

Singapore is becoming increasingly vulnerable to corruption elsewhere, the PERC report said, citing the soured investment by Temasek Holdings, a state-linked investment firm, in Thai telecom giant Shin Corp.

The tax-free sale of Shin Corp. to Temasek by the Thaksin family fueled the political crisis that led to the military taking power in Thailand.

Another problem, according to the report, is that foreigners "who have profited from corruption elsewhere in Asia sometimes seek a haven for their ill-gotten gains" in Singapore, where rich Indonesian families hold massive assets.

Indonesia pleased

Indonesia was pleased that its image had improved.

"I think there is enough basis for that rating, because there have now been a lot of anticorruption policies put in place," said Teten Masduki, chair of Indonesia Corruption Watch.

He said reforms were beginning to yield results within the government, including in curbing corrupt practices and promoting transparency.

"Of course we are happy," said Johan S.P. Budi, spokesperson for Indonesia's National Anti-Corruption Committee.

"At least it shows the seriousness of the government in its efforts to improve its image and in curbing corruption," he said.

Conflicts of interest

Somchai Jitsuchon, director of macroeconomics at the Thailand Development Research Institute, said he was not surprised by the findings, which related mainly to the Thaksin era.

"Circumstantial evidence has clearly shown that there is no improvement in terms of policy corruption, while emerging conflicts of interest got worse during Thaksin's government," Somchai told AFP.

He said policies endorsed during Thaksin's administration overwhelmingly benefited certain business groups, especially those owned by Thaksin himself.

"Given the limited tenure of this interim government, the chance of corruption rising further is minimal. But it doesn't mean all these bureaucrats would not become corrupt if they had a chance," Somchai said.

IN THE KNOW

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RISK Consultancy (PERC) is a Hong Kong-based firm that produces risk reports on East and Southeast Asian countries to help corporations and financial institutions assess key trends in each country, identify growth opportunities and develop business strategies.

PERC reports highlight socio-political variables like corruption and labor quality. In 2005, it released a survey saying foreign entrepreneurs had ranked the Philippines as the second most corrupt country in Asia, next to Indonesia.

For reports on the Philippines, the Hong Kong office sends researchers to the country or uses the services of local university professors, economists and political scientists, said managing director Robert Broadfoot in a phone interview.

Broadfoot, an American, founded the consulting firm in 1976. The economics graduate of Oberlin College in the United States has been living in Hong Kong since 1975. ***Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research***

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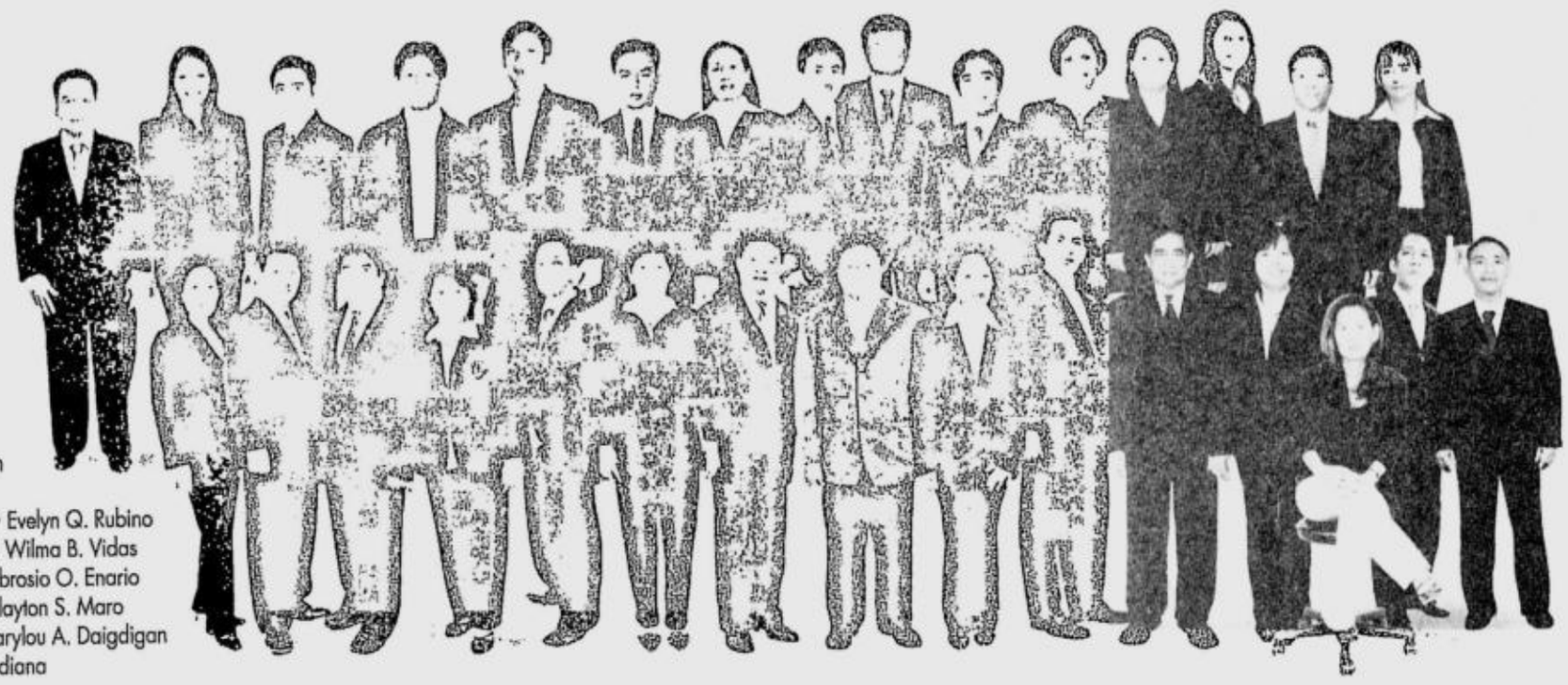

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No remake of biggest strawberry cake

By Delmar Cariño
La Trinidad, Benguet

THE ONGOING STRAWBERRY Festival in La Trinidad, Benguet, will not have a remake of the giant strawberry cake that the Guinness Book of World Records recognized in 2004.

But an equally sized concrete replica of the cake that made history will be unveiled in front of the town hall, alongside a strawberry lane where fresh strawberries and derived products are displayed.

It is also a strawberry house that disseminates information about the crop for visitors and residents.

"The celebration is more of a tribute to the strawberry industry that placed the town on the world map," said La Trinidad Mayor Nestor Fongwan.

Of course there will still be strawberry cakes to be tasted, he said. In fact, a large cake will be baked for President Macapagal-Arroyo when she inaugurates a vegetable processing center near the La Trinidad vegetable trading post on March 19.

"We would request her to take and taste the first slice," Fongwan said.

The "Largest Strawberry Butter Cake" presented in 2004 weighed 11,146.61 kilograms. It was 8.42 feet high, 12.31 feet long, and 8.68 feet wide.

The Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants, which was commissioned to measure the cake's exact dimensions, reported that the public consumed 42,083 slices of the cake.

Sweeter

The strawberries have grown sweeter since the record-breaking feat. The sweetness comes not only in taste but also in increased production that has brought more income to farmers.

STRAWBERRIES are abundant as La Trinidad town in Benguet celebrates the Strawberry Festival this month. EV ESPIRITU

Some 820 farmers till 77 hectares of the town's strawberry fields, producing an annual average of 3,234 metric tons of strawberries.

And from a price range of P75 to P100 a kilogram, a farmer taking care of a half-hectare of strawberry land will hit pay dirt.

Fely Ticbaen, the municipal agriculturist, said the success of the industry could be attributed to the farmers' improved management system. Their decision to dump the sweet Charlie variety following a decline in production also boosted their annual sales, she said.

The farmers gained a lot from using the Camarosa and Festival varieties lately.

Sweet Charlie came from Argentina, while the two new varieties were imported from San Francisco, California.

The Benguet State University is conducting studies to produce cultivars that can grow all year round or can be raised in greenhouses, Ticbaen said.

Several foreigners are also pitching in, Fongwan said. Experts from the Washington State University are in town and are identifying predators to counter the spider mites that usually prey on strawberry plants, he added.

Festival shows a hundred ways for Ilocanos to make 'lubi-lubi'

By Cristina Arzadon
Laoag City

HOW DO THE ILOCANOS MAKE their rice cakes? Count a hundred ways.

The Ilocano cake, whose main component is glutinous rice, is locally known as "*lubi-lubi*" (derived from the act of pounding and mashing the ingredients).

Shredded root crops, such as *camote* (sweet potato), cassava, *ube* (purple yam) and *gabi* (taro) are mixed with sticky rice to create a variety of flavors, colors and toppings.

Other rice cakes have coconut strips and bits of *mongo*, banana and corn. Some are sliced while others must be served whole as they are too soggy to be cut.

The flat cakes were featured during the annual "Dulang" food affair this month to mark Laoag City's month-long Pamulinawen festival. The *dulang* (similar to a sushi table that the Japanese usually use) is a low-legged dinner table that early Ilocano families used.

More than a dozen banana-wrapped native cakes in various *bilao* (bamboo-made round trays) were laid on a long table at the City Hall grounds.

Mary Ang, a festival organizer, said the *lubi-lubi* was created by early Ilocano housewives who had no immediate access to public markets for their daily household needs. "Instead of buying food, housewives would just pick something from their backyards (such as root crops) and turn them into a delicacy," she said.

Lubi-lubi making is still practiced in the region's rural areas where most people do not have the means or convenience of buying fast food items. To them, rice cake production has become a community tradition and a means of social interaction.

Community act

Ilocano folk artists, who are known to expressing their sentiments through songs, best describe in one popular song how the traditional food preparation has become a community act:

"*Intayon maki-lubi-lubi, Diay balay da Ama Ipi, Diak kayat ti umay, Addanto pay agtamay* ... (Let's head toward the house of Father Ipi to have some *lubi-lubi*. But I'm afraid to go, there might be witches ...).

"We need to revive these community traditions through our native delicacies and balance the modern times, especially in this age where everyone relies on harmful fast food," Ang said.

Rice cakes are usually cooked in earthenware without the harmful chemicals present in aluminum pots, she noted. They have been continuously sidelined because of a variety of fast food items in the market like burgers, she said.

Most native delicacies are still sold in public markets but demand for them rises, particularly on All Souls' Day when they are made as food offerings during prayer rites.

They are also popular during peak tourist months, especially for some tourists who are looking for homemade delicacies.

The city tourism council led by Chevylle Fariñas, wife of Laoag Mayor Michael Fariñas, gathered popular Ilocano cuisine, like the *bagnet* (crunchy pork chunks), *longganiza* (native pork sausage) and native desserts as part of the annual tradition to showcase authentic Ilocano food.

"The Dulang feast is always well-attended because food binds Ilocanos regardless of belief or orientation," Chevylle said as dozens of residents, mostly City Hall workers, swarmed tables to sample the food.

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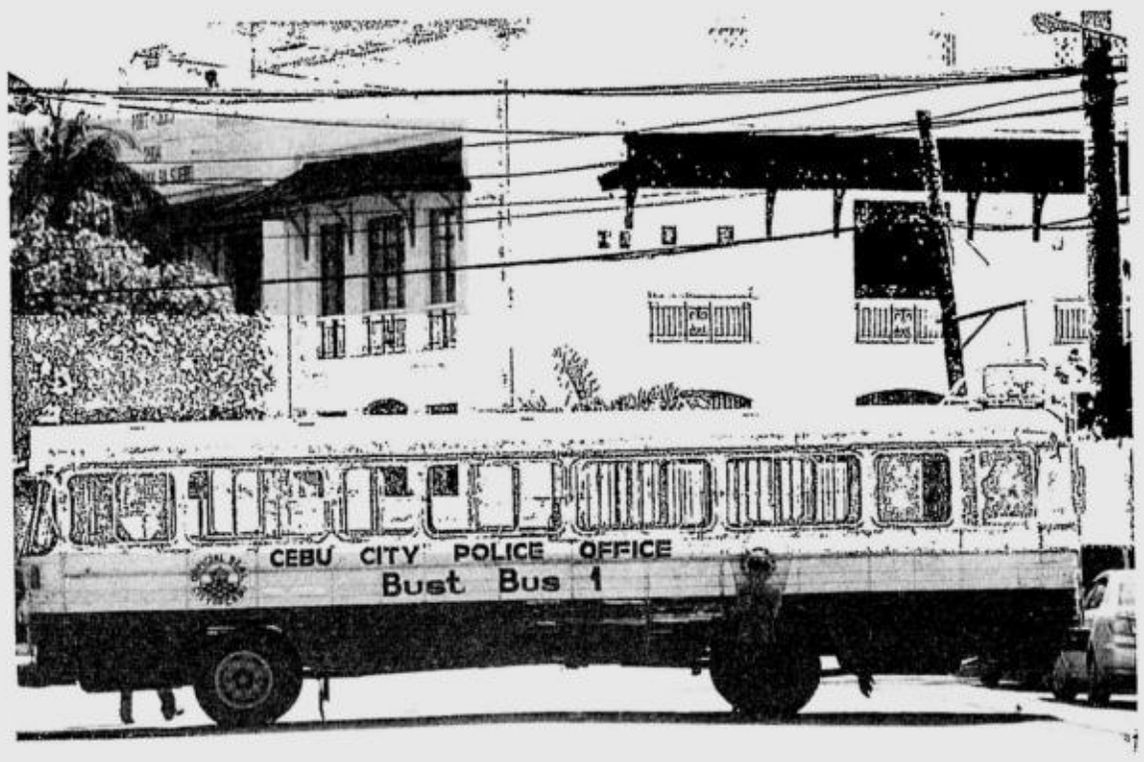
Lampposts costing ₱300,000 each bare growing Cebu scam

CEBU CITY—THE CONtroversy over lampposts that were installed in three cities in Cebu for the 12th Asean summit in January is getting bigger as several of the items were found to have been bought for P300,000 each and 30-40 of them were installed in a private resort.



A POLICE bus blocks a road leading to the Malacañang sa Sugbu, the President's official residence in Cebu City to prevent the entry of protesters during the 12th Asean summit. Protesters were demanding that the Asean take up issues on social justice and human rights. REM ZAMORA

The discovery of the more expensive lampposts and those installed in the resort came as the Ombudsman in the Visayas conducted an inspection of the items in Cebu, Mandaue and Lapu-Lapu cities.

The Ombudsman found several defects in the lampposts that the government bought for P85,000 to P224,000 each to decorate the streets for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit held here.

Virginia Palanca-Santiago, acting deputy Ombudsman for the Visayas, said the agency's inspectors checked the 1,800 lampposts Monday. These were installed along the routes where delegates to the Asean summit passed in the three cities.

'We have noted several defects ... Some have even been destroyed ...'

P300,000 each

The Ombudsman started investigating the installation of the lampposts and their costs after receiving a complaint alleging that these were overpriced.

Those installed in Cebu City cost P83,000 each, while those in Mandaue cost P224,000 each.

The Ombudsman found after its inspection that some of the lampposts in Mandaue actually cost the government P300,000 each.

Thirty to 40 lampposts were installed in Porto Fino, a private resort in Lapu-Lapu.

A resort officer, who refused to be identified, said the resort management would explain its response to the Ombudsman's query.

Private property

Santiago said the Ombudsman had asked the resort management and the Department of Public Works and Highways to explain why the lampposts were installed on private property.

She said the Ombudsman was also investigating 140 lampposts that cost P315,000 to P351,000 each in Mandaue.

Santiago said the Ombudsman conducted the inspection to determine if the installed lampposts matched specifications.

"We have noted several defects," she said. "Some have even been destroyed."

Some lampposts have loose or missing plastic casings for light bulbs, busted bulbs and discolored metal and base.

She said the Ombudsman would inspect them again at night to see if they work.

The Ombudsman would ask the Commission on Audit to attend a conference this week as part of the investigation, Santiago said.

Cheaper posts

She said the Ombudsman was studying documents from the municipality of Naga on the purchase of similar—but cheaper—lampposts last year.

She said her office would compare prices and specifications of lampposts bought by Naga and those bought for the Asean summit.

"All these documents would aid us in our investigation," she said.

The antigraft office is also consolidating a COA 2003 report on the purchase of 105 lampposts at P110,000 each by Mandaue.

The report asked Mandaue to refrain from purchasing uneconomical and expensive lampposts, which would violate rules on excessive expenditures.

Marlina Alvizo, assistant regional director of the DPWH said in a recent meeting with the Ombudsman that the local governments of Lapu-Lapu and Mandaue prepared the lampposts' programs of works, which included the costing.

The Cebu City government was not involved, he said.

The DPWH had allotted at least P120 million for the decorative items. The Department of Budget and Management said it released a total of P800 million for the holding of the Asean summit.

Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez has directed the local antigraft office to include in its investigation other transactions related to the hosting of the summit. *Jolene Bulambot, Inquirer Visayas*

Gov't may free Misuari soon, lawyers claim

COTABATO CITY—DETAINED MORO LEADER Nur Misuari will soon be freed to help in the administration's political and peace campaign in Mindanao, his lawyers claimed.

Administration senatorial candidates have been having difficulty in the campaign following recent surveys that showed opposition senatorial candidates were leading in many parts of the country.

Sumdad Dalidig and Art Lim said the Arroyo administration believes Misuari could help push peace efforts in Mindanao.

Misuari, a former governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, is considered one of the most influential Moro leaders. He was charged with rebellion for allegedly leading the 2001 MNLF uprising in Sulu, which left dozens of people dead.

The government has allowed Misuari to leave his detention cell in Laguna on several occasions. In December, the rebel leader was able to go to Sulu to register anew with the Commission on Elections.

Charlie Señase, Inquirer Mindanao

Cops preparing Leyte jail for Satur, co-accused

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—A sub-provincial jail in Hilongos, Leyte, is being prepared for the detention of Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and his co-accused, a jail officer said.

JO3 Nelson Ibañez said additional guards would be assigned once Ocampo, and company are kept there.

"The augmentation force will come from our provincial jail as well as from our sub-provincial jails in Baybay and Abuyog," he said.

Ibañez declined to say how many security personnel would be added.

MARKET children selling P1 plastic bags check out a shrine which Baguio activists set up to commemorate the unsolved murder of Bayan Muna Ilocos coordinator Romeo Sanchez. EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

The issuance of the warrants against the top leaders of the communist group and 53 others stemmed from a recommendation of the Provincial Prosecutors' Office to file multiple murder charges against them in connection with the discovery of a grave site in Sitio Sapang Daku, Barangay Caulisihan, Inopacan town on Aug. 26 last year.

The military uncovered a mass grave in Sogod, Southern Leyte, containing at least 67 skeletal remains, said to be those of victims of a communist purge in the early 1980s. The victims, it claimed, were executed on suspicion of being government spies.

The Philippine National Police-Eastern Visayas legal division filed the multiple murder complaint against the accused.

Ibañez said police had received intelligence information that Ocampo would surrender to Executive Judge Ephrem Abando of the Regional Trial Court Branch 18 within the week.

"Based on our information, he will surrender two or three days from now. We got this information from our intelligence network," he said. He declined to give further details.

The Hilongos jail, which has 113 inmates occupying five cells, is less than 25 meters from the office of Judge Abando. The jail, 146 kilometers from here, has 30 guards.

On Monday last week, Abando issued the warrants against Ocampo, Communist Party of the Philippines founding chair Jose Maria Sison and Luis Jalandoni of the National Democratic Front, among other persons, for 15 counts of murder.

Col. Romeo Lacurom, commander of the Army's 43rd Infantry Battalion, said his soldiers were ready to help should the court request the military to help secure the jail.

"This is also part of an understanding between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police to help each other in internal security operations," Lacurom said in a text message.

Several representatives of the accused, including that of Ocampo, had come to his office to secure a copy of the charge sheet and the warrant he issued against them, Abando said.

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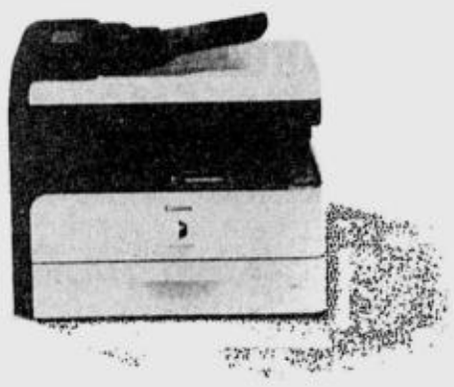

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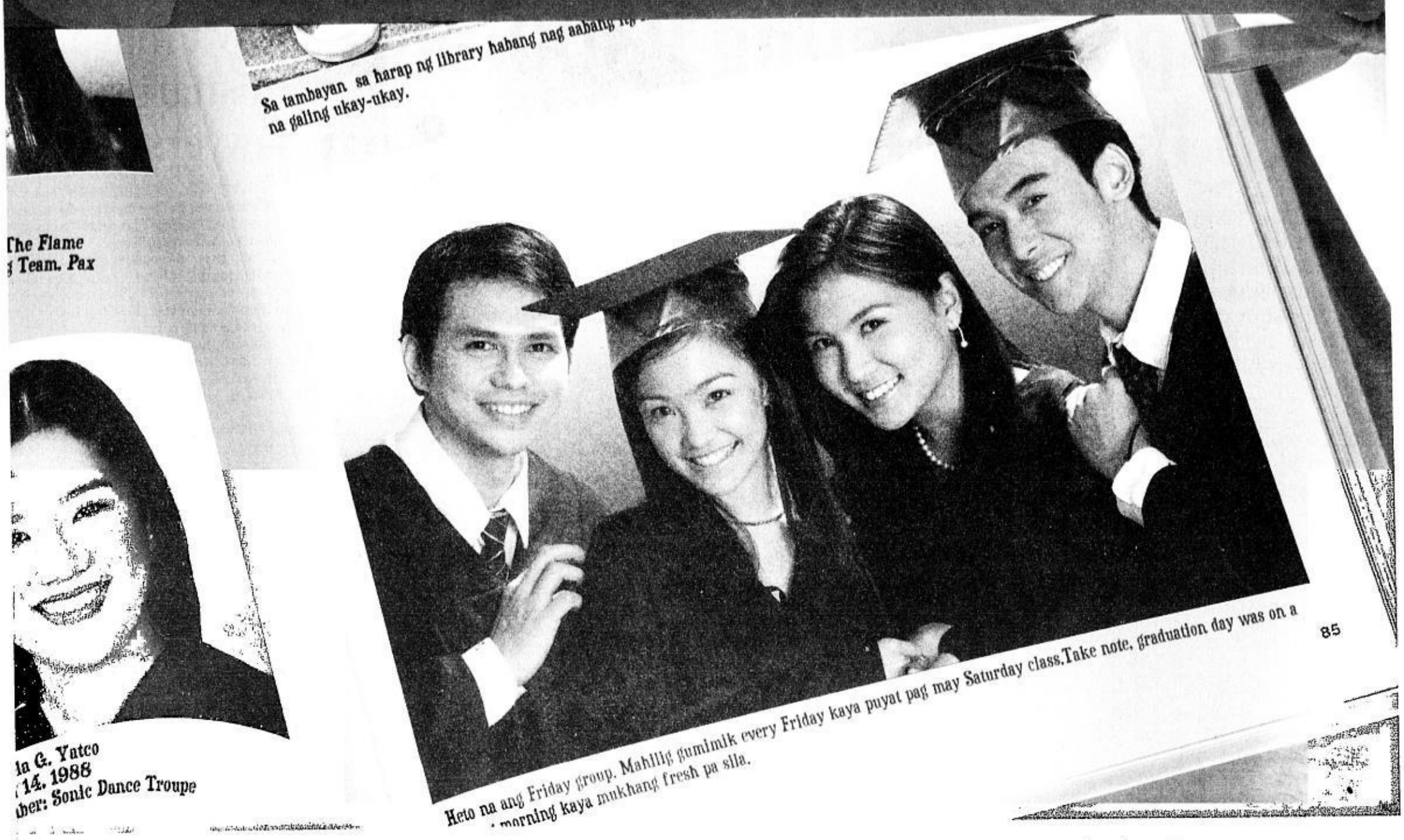

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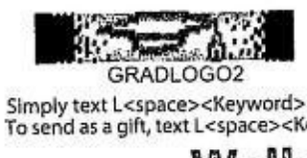

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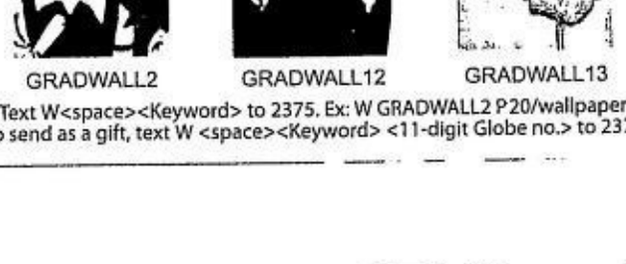

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Mayors ask for more time before closing bridge

'2 months to look into Tullahan traffic problems'

By Margaux C. Ortiz

MAYORS IN THE CAMANAVA (Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela) area have asked the Department of Public Works and Highways to postpone the rehabilitation of Tullahan Bridge for two months.

In a letter sent to Public Works officer in charge Manuel Bonoan, the mayors said the 60-day reprieve would give them time to address traffic concerns in their areas arising from the closure of the bridge.

The letter dated March 12 was signed by Valenzuela Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian, Caloocan City Mayor Recom Echiverri, Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco and Malabon City Mayor Canuto Oreta. The four areas are adjacent to each other.

The 73-year-old Tullahan Bridge in Valenzuela links the city, Malabon and Manila to Bulacan province. It is scheduled to undergo complete rehabilitation beginning this Friday. According to the DPWH, the structure needs to be repaired immediately because its steel parts are already corroded.

To ensure that work on the bridge is completed as soon as possible, the DPWH wants the bridge closed to traffic until its rehabilitation is completed. Lydia Chua, DPWH-National Capital Region Planning and Design Division chief, said the rehabilitation of Tullahan Bridge would take five months.

The mayors pointed out in their letter that the dry run of the traffic rerouting scheme last week failed because of the lack of coordination between the national and local government agencies.

"During the dry run, heavy traffic occurred and vehicles were stranded for almost three to four hours on both sides of the bridge. As a consequence, workers, students and teachers were unable to report for work on time while some of them were not able to reach their places of destination," they added.

"As a matter of fact, some of the students were not able to take their final examinations scheduled on that day," the officials said.

According to them, the dry run showed that the alternative routes could not accommodate the large volume of vehicles passing through the bridge each day.

They also pointed out that some of the routes were on private property, requiring motorists to coordinate with the homeowners' associations concerned.

"The day-to-day affairs of the local government units will be severely affected by the closure, including the delivery of basic services to the people," the mayors stressed in their letter.

In a phone interview with the INQUIRER, Echiverri said the closure of the Tullahan Bridge was "untimely" in view of the upcoming May elections. "Elections come only once every three years and the flurry of activities that come with it would surely affect motorists," he added.

Gatchalian, on the other hand, has been meeting with the DPWH and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority for a better traffic scheme that would be "less disruptive" for motorists and commuters.

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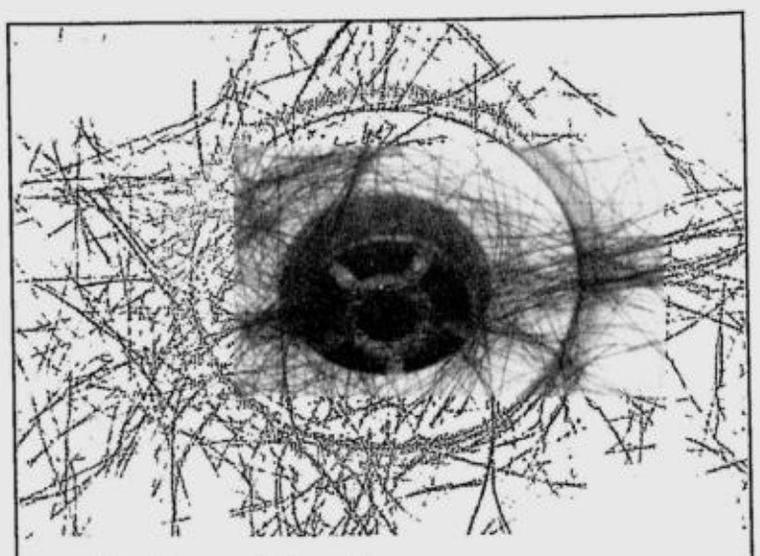
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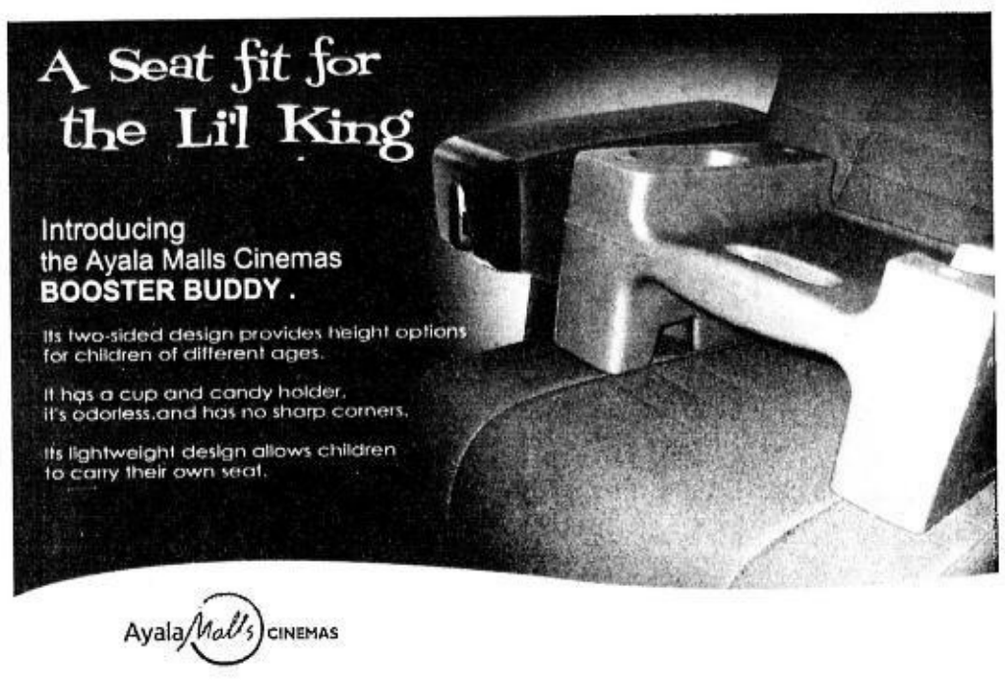
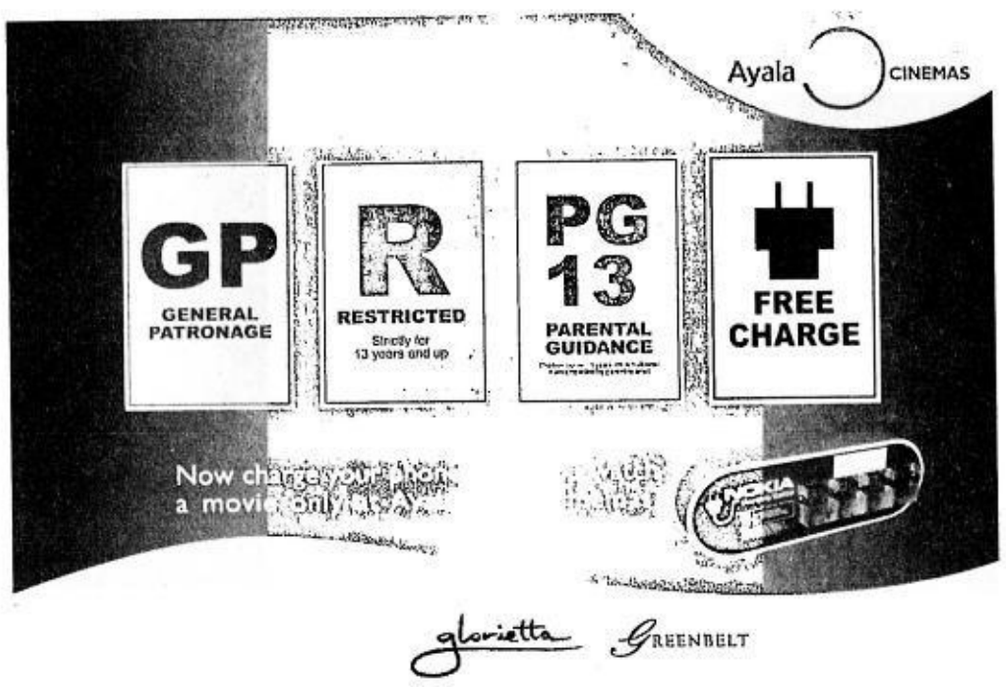




Oil firms appeal SC decision

By Abigail L. Ho

PETRON CORP, PILIPINAS SHELL Petroleum Corp. and Chevron Philippines Inc. (formerly Caltex) asked the Supreme Court the other day to reconsider its order for them to move out of the Pandacan oil depot in Manila within six months.

"At present and in the foreseeable future, there are no viable relocation sites that have the adequate infrastructure—access roads, pipelines—in place and close enough to Metro Manila and its environs to ensure a reliable and safe supply of products," a joint statement issued by the oil firms said.

The High Tribunal last week ordered Manila Mayor Lito Atienza to immediately enforce City Ordinance No. 8027 which reclassifies the area where the oil depot is located from industrial to commercial. Once it is enforced, the city government would have to shut down the depot *(See related story below)*.

The Supreme Court had not been informed that Ordinance No. 8027 had been superseded by Ordinance No. 8119, which gave them seven years to relocate their operations, the oil firms said. They also pointed out that several cases seeking to nullify both ordinances were still pending in a lower court.

The shutdown of the Pandacan depot would adversely affect the fuel supply, not only in Metro Manila, but the entire country as well, the companies' statement added.

Industry data showed that 50 percent of the country's total fuel requirements go through the Pandacan depot. It supplies around 1,800 retail stations in Regions I to IV, almost 500 of which are in the metropolis. It also provides 70 percent of the shipping industry's fuel needs, 75 percent of the country's aviation fuel requirements and 90 percent of lubricants.

Close to 200 million liters of jet fuel supplied to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport comes from the Pandacan oil depot, in addition to around 7.5 million liters of fuel distributed to Manila ports. "The closure of the terminals will affect most industries—transport, construction, food manufacturing, mining, power generation, air and sea travel. This would consequently have a negative effect on the national economy," the oil companies said.

They stressed various measures that would ensure the safety of those residing within the vicinity of the depot are already in place. These include the dismantling of 28 product storage tanks, the creation of the Pandacan Linear Parks that serve as an additional buffer zone between the depot and the residential area surrounding it and the establishment of an integrated oil terminal managed by Pandacan Depot Services Inc.

"The motion filed with the Supreme Court reiterated Petron, Shell and Chevron's concern for a reliable, safe and steady supply of fuels to their respective customers. It likewise states their intention to exhaust all legal remedies available to address this serious matter," Luis Vera Cruz Jr., a lawyer representing the companies, said.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla earlier said that to prevent a disruption in fuel supply, his department, in coordination with the Office of the Solicitor General, would seek to clarify the Supreme Court ruling. *With Leila B. Salaverria*

Proposed oil depot site unsafe, says dad

By Allison W. Lopez

A DUMP AND AN OIL DEPOT IN Tondo?

Saying that Smokey Mountain already posed a health hazard, a Manila councilor yesterday criticized the proposal to transfer the Pandacan oil depot to the Harbour Centre.

"We are not in favor of moving the depot to Tondo," said Benjamin Asilo, a councilor of Manila's first district.

He vowed to mobilize his constituents against the plan, saying it was unsafe since only a highway would separate the residents from the depot's proposed new location.

Mayor Lito Atienza suggested the other day that the oil depot be moved to Harbour Centre just off Manila Bay.

Since the area was not too far from Pandacan, the Big Three oil firms—Shell, Chevron and Petron—would not have to spend millions of pesos in transferring their operations, he added.

Atienza was ordered last week by the Supreme Court to enforce a city ordinance reclassifying Pandacan from an industrial to a commercial area *(See related story above)*.

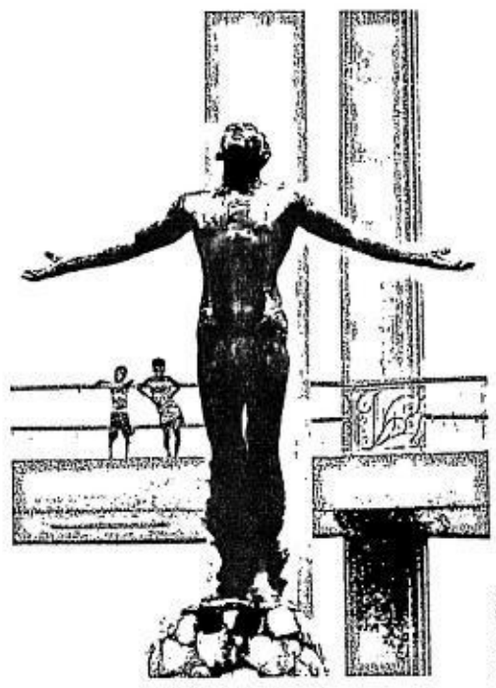
Asilo said the depot's proposed location was beside an open dump, the "new" Smokey Mountain. Only Marcos Road, he said, separates the industrial area from the "old" Smokey Mountain, a dump which had been converted into a mass housing complex.

He added that the 21 residential buildings built on the old Smokey Mountain stood on ground which he described as "soft and continuing to emit toxic fumes."

"It's a ticking time bomb," said Asilo, who claimed that at least four to five barangays with over 20,000 residents would be in danger in case of a terrorist attack on the depot. The depot, he added, holds a daily average of 170 million liters of oil.

Asilo said Total's operations in Harbour Centre were significantly "minimal" compared to the Big Three oil firms. Total relocated to Tondo months after the ordinance reclassifying Pandacan was passed in 2001.

"Atienza should hold a dialogue with the people, not with the oil companies," the councilor said.



RAFFY LERMA

OBLATION statue at UP Diliman entrance.

S&T park to rise in Quezon City

By Margaux C. Ortiz

FINALLY, A LOCAL VERSION OF THE WORLD-famous Silicon Valley.

A new science and technology park on the University of the Philippines campus in Diliman, Quezon City, is scheduled to be developed by the end of the year.

The UP North Science and Technology (S&T) Park is envisioned as "an integrated community of S&T companies creating a dynamic learning laboratory conducive to incubatee (start-up company) development and industry-academe collaborations," according to Corazon Añonuevo, Ayala Land senior vice president. Ayala Land is the park developer.

Anonuevo said the 3.7-ha park would form part of the UP Diliman campus.

"The park will even be more attractive when the proposed Metro Rail Transit Line 7, which would run on Commonwealth Avenue from North Triangle to Bulacan, is constructed," she added in the project brief.

The Ayala Land official explained that the S&T park would be composed of 10 low-rise office buildings which would be leased to corporate office tenants in high technology fields like telecommunications, telematics, information technology and biotechnology.

Other tenants include people from high-value business process outsourcing industries such as accounting, animation, software development, design and engineering services, as well as start-up companies or "incubatees."

Añonuevo said the 10 office buildings, surrounded by a park with integrated landscaped spaces, would be developed in phases.

Shared amenities such as residential and hotel buildings are also included in the development's master plan.

"The project shall likewise consist of a retail strip at the central portion of the site fronting Commonwealth Avenue," Añonuevo said, adding that the area would be developed into a "village-type" retail center complete with restaurants, bookstores, coffee shops and other service establishments.

The UP North S&T Park would also be equipped with a visitors' portal, a business center, meeting rooms and fitness and recreation centers. Añonuevo said that they hope to complete two office buildings by the end of the year.

Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. said the development of the park would further strengthen the city government's goal to become the country's information and communication technology capital.

"The project promises to be a magnet for fast-evolving high technology companies that would prove essential for the creation of a strong business and employment center in Quezon City," Belmonte said in a statement.

Biazon denies hand in relief of police chief

By Julie M. Aurelio

"IT WASN'T ME."

This was the reaction of Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon on talk that he was behind the relief of former Muntinlupa police chief Supt. Jose Mario Espino the other day.

"I'm surprised by that story. There is no bad blood between us," Biazon said in a phone interview.

Espino's relief was announced by Southern Police District director, Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales on Monday. Rosales, however, did not give any reason for his action.

Espino, meanwhile, told the INQUIRER that he blamed Biazon for his relief. "I had information that it was Biazon who wanted me out," he said in a phone interview the other day.

Espino added Biazon sought his relief because the former believed he favored TV host Ricardo "Dong" Puno who is reportedly running against the congressman in May.

According to Biazon, he does not have any influence over the Department of Interior and Local Government in its appointment or dismissal of police officials.

There were earlier reports that Biazon asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to relieve Espino, a request which he supposedly coursed through House Speaker Jose de Venecia (JDV).

"Espino knows that I talked to JDV. The Speaker himself told Espino there was no such order," he added.

Biazon also sent a letter to Philippine National Police chief, Director General Oscar Calderon, where he said that dismissing Espino without a valid reason was unfair and uncalled for.

"It would be unfair to Espino if he is summarily relieved without proper justification," Biazon said.

Leviste motion heard today

By DJ Yap

A MAKATI COURT IS SET TO hear a motion by state prosecutors to cite former Batangas Gov. Jose Antonio Leviste and his doctors for contempt for allegedly conspiring to extend Leviste's stay in the hospital.

Judge Elmo Alameda of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150 will act today on an urgent motion by Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco to cite the former governor for indirect contempt.

Also covered by the motion are Doctors Raynato Kasilag and Ramon Luis Liboro, who, along with Leviste, were accused of "belittling, degrading, obstructing, interrupting and embarrassing" the court.

The motion to cite them in contempt stemmed from a court order dated March 6 directing the Makati City jail warden to return Leviste to the jail upon discharge from the Makati Medical Center.

Although the doctors said that Leviste was ready to be discharged on March 7, he remained confined in the hospital for two more days. He was only returned to the city jail on March 10.

Leviste, who has been charged with the murder of his longtime aide Rafael de las Alas, was treated for hypertension and gastrointestinal bleeding.

OLD RELIABLE
A mother feeds her child on top of a carabao statue at Rizal Park in Manila. REM ZAMORA

Property dispute angle eyed in killing of prominent trader

By Allison W. Lopez

MANILA POLICEMEN ARE EYEING a family dispute over property in the murder of a businessman in Malate Saturday night.

Chief Insp. Alex Yanquiling of the homicide division said their initial investigation revealed that the two men who killed Federico Chiudian Delgado may have been searching for documents involving several pieces of property and dollar bank accounts.

Delgado was the son of former Ambassador to the Holy See Francisco "Paco" Delgado.

The elder Delgado was married to Vicky Quirino, his second wife, who died in Amsterdam in November 2006. Quirino was the daughter of former President Elpidio Quirino.

Federico was found dead in his apartment at the Mayflower building on Leon Guinto Street after his companion, Annalisa Peseco, escaped and reported the incident to the police.

Peseco, who sustained bruises on the face and arms, told the police that two men suddenly attacked her and Delgado when they arrived at his room at 10:30 p.m.

She said the suspects lunged at Delgado while she was mauled, hogtied and locked inside a dressing room.

Peseco added that she heard the suspects "searching the room."

She said she managed to untie herself at 3:30 a.m. and rushed to the nearest police precinct to report the crime.

Responding police found Delgado lying in a pool of blood at the entrance to his room.

He sustained three stab wounds in the chest.

The name "Franco," written in blood, was found on the wall near the victim's body.

Yanquiling said that although they have identified "Franco" as Federico's older sibling, they have yet to speak with him and other relatives who may be able to shed light on the incident.

Armed men shoot dead 2 sisters waiting for ride

By Allison W. Lopez

TWO SISTERS WERE SHOT DEAD by two men while they were waiting for a ride yesterday morning in Sta. Mesa, Manila.

Lorna and Rose Retumban were gunned down by two unidentified men at Pureza Street corner Ramon Magsaysay Boulevard.

Police reports said the sisters, along with Lorna's unnamed boyfriend, were about to board a passenger jeepney when one of the suspects grabbed Lorna and cursed her before shooting her in the head.

The other suspect then dragged Rose away from the jeep before she was shot dead by the suspect's companion.

Police said Rose had been charged with theft earlier in the Manila Police District, but was released on March 7 due to lack of evidence.

Chief inspector Alex Yanquiling of the homicide division said they had already identified the gunman. The suspects are natives of Zambales province like the victims, Yanquiling added.

The police said they learned the sisters were planning to go back to Zambales to "start a new life," but the shooting incident ended that dream.

Fleeing rob suspects killed after holdup

By Jeannette I. Andrade

TWO SUSPECTED ROBBERS were killed Monday night in an encounter with operatives of the Quezon City police an hour after they held up a woman.

The fatalities who remained unidentified were described only as between 25 to 30 years old, 5'6" tall and of slim build.

One of the suspects had the names Alma and Sheryl tattooed on his chest and JR on his left arm. The other also had several names—Joseph, Aries, Carlo, Tatalon and Brosam—tattooed across his back and Buboy and JR on his chest.

The police said both died of multiple gunshot wounds.

Supt. Franklin Moises Mabanag, Quezon City Police District Criminal Investigation Division head, said in a report that the incident happened at around 10:30 p.m. Monday on N. Domingo Street in Barangay Horseshoe.

Mabanag said that operatives of the QCPD Police Station 7 in Cubao were on patrol after receiving a report about two men on board a motorcycle who had robbed Florida de Guzman at the corner of Edsa and Liberty Street in Barangay Socorro at 9:45 p.m.

When the policemen spotted two men on board a motorcycle, they flagged down the vehicle but the suspects opened fire at them, prompting them to shoot back.

Policemen later recovered from the two men an MK-2 fragmentation grenade, a caliber .38 revolver, and several spent shells from a .45 caliber pistol and .38 revolver. They also found a black wallet with De Guzman's identification card and P560 in cash inside.

Cops foil woman's attempt to steal vault

By Jeannette I. Andrade

POLICEMEN IN QUEZON CITY arrested yesterday a 39-year-old woman who tried to steal a vault containing P1 million worth of jewelry.

Julie Natividad Valdez, a resident of Tondo, Manila, was arrested after the driver of the taxi which she had flagged down, Ramon Valdez, became suspicious when she loaded the vault into his vehicle.

The taxi driver immediately drove to a police station in La Loma where he sought help from lawmen.

SPO1 Ramuel Relox, chief investigator of the La Loma police, said that the suspect had taken the vault from the house of businessman Braulio Galamiton on Scout Limbaga Street, Barangay Sacred Heart, Kamuning, Quezon City at around 10 a.m. yesterday.

After introducing herself as Galamiton's sister, the suspect tricked the trader's maid, saying Galamiton had asked her to take the vault from his house.

The maid even helped the suspect load the vault into the taxi driven by Ramon.

The suspect then asked Ramon to take her to Tayuman, Manila.

By that time, however, the taxi driver had become suspicious and drove her instead to the La Loma police station.

Valdez is now detained at the La Loma police station pending the filing of robbery charges against her.

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ON MARCH 14, 1903, Detroit entrepreneur Charles Swift incorporated in the state of New Jersey the Manila Electric Railroad and Light Co. (Meralco). Ten days later, the US-established civilian government in Manila granted Swift the franchise to operate an electric street railway and to provide current for light, heat and power.

But after its generating plants were sold to the government in 1979, Meralco focused on electric distribution, sourcing power from the National Power Corp. and independent power producers.

Meralco's franchise area currently spans 9,337 square kilometers, covering 25 cities and 86 municipalities. It services 20 million persons, about a quarter of the country's population.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

UN set to tighten sanctions vs Iran

UNITED NATIONS—SIX MAJOR POWERS MOVED CLOSER Monday toward a draft resolution tightening sanctions against Iran over its controversial nuclear program, Britain's UN ambassador said.

"We've made substantial progress," Emyr Jones Parry told reporters after envoys of the six nations held two hours of informal talks here.

"Our expectation now is that the fruit of our discussion will be sorted out by our experts this evening, sent back to our capitals and we will meet again tomorrow morning to see how we take it forward," he added.

The two-hour informal session involving envoys of the UN Security Council's five permanent members (P5)—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States—plus Germany followed up on bargaining sessions they held throughout last week.

Jones Parry said the P5 would be able to report Tuesday their progress to the Security Council's 10 nonpermanent members.

The six are considering new punitive measures, including a travel ban on officials involved in illicit nuclear work, an arms embargo as well as financial and trade restrictions, to tighten sanctions adopted by the council last December in the face of Tehran's nuclear defiance.

Last week, China and Russia voiced reservations about the travel ban, the trade restrictions and a proposal to extend an assets freeze to "entities, owned or controlled by the Iranian Revolutionary Corps (IRGC)." They also objected to preventing any technical help to entities involved in Iran's nuclear and missile programs.

"There are some last-minute details which need to be worked out...We're quite close," Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said late Monday.

"Fundamentals have been worked out...but the devil is in the details. There are no main sticking points, but three or four details have to be finalized."

His Chinese counterpart Wang Guangya said the financial and trade restrictions had been dropped from the text.

"We've made overall good progress. I don't want to raise expectations because we're all reporting back to capitals," said US acting ambassador Alejandro Wolff. *AFP*

CHIRAC

US-French ties likely to shift

WASHINGTON—US-FRENCH RElations are set to shift as France chooses a successor to President Jacques Chirac, who has defined himself on the world stage as an opponent of American dominance.

With Chirac's long-expected announcement Sunday that he would not seek another term, French elections beginning April 22 provide an opportunity for the allies to strengthen cooperation unhindered by rancor between Chirac and US President George W. Bush.

While the two nations have cooperated in recent years on many issues dear to Washington, relations between the two presidents never fully recovered from Chirac's vehement opposition to the Iraq war.

On Monday, Bush—through a spokesperson—wished Chirac well in his life after politics.

"The United States and France have been and will remain steadfast partners and allies," spokesperson Gordon Johndroe said.

Some analysts said new leadership in Paris—and within two years in Washington—would help return the relationship to a historical norm characterized by cooperation occasionally interrupted by respectful disagreement. *AP*

Australia, Japan sign landmark security pact

TOKYO—JAPAN ON TUESDAY SIGNED A security pact with Australia, its first such deal after its alliance with the United States, but the Pacific nations denied they were trying to encircle China.

In a sign of how relations have been transformed six decades since they fought in World War II, the two nations agreed to expand cooperation in peacekeeping, emergency relief and counterterrorism.

"Australia has no better friend or more reliable partner within the Asia-Pacific region than Japan," Australian Prime Minister John Howard said before signing the pact with his counterpart Shinzo Abe.

"We are great Pacific democracies," Howard told business leaders. "Japan has had a strongly rooted practice of democracy now for more than 60 years."

While the deal is mostly general in nature, it marks a new step for Japan, which has been officially pacifist since its defeat in World War II.

Japan's only other security pact is with the United States, which stations some 40,000 troops in the country.

In reference to Japan's war-renouncing constitution, the joint declaration said cooperation between Australia and Japan would not infringe on either country's laws.

The deal also calls for three-way meetings involving the United States.

Both Abe and Howard have insisted the pact was not aimed at China, which has sparked concern in Japan and the United States with its rapidly growing military spending.

China reacted calmly to the pact. Asked if Beijing believed Abe and Howard's assurances, foreign ministry spokesperson Qin Gang said, "We hope what they said is true."

"At the same time China will not threaten other countries. We are tranquil in our heart," he said in Beijing.

Abe has worked since taking office last September to ease tensions with China and South Korea due largely to the legacy of Tokyo's wartime imperialism.

But the conservative leader has also campaigned to shake off the legacies of Japan's World War II defeat.

He has vowed to rewrite the US-imposed constitution and build a four-way alliance with fellow democracies Australia, India and the United States.

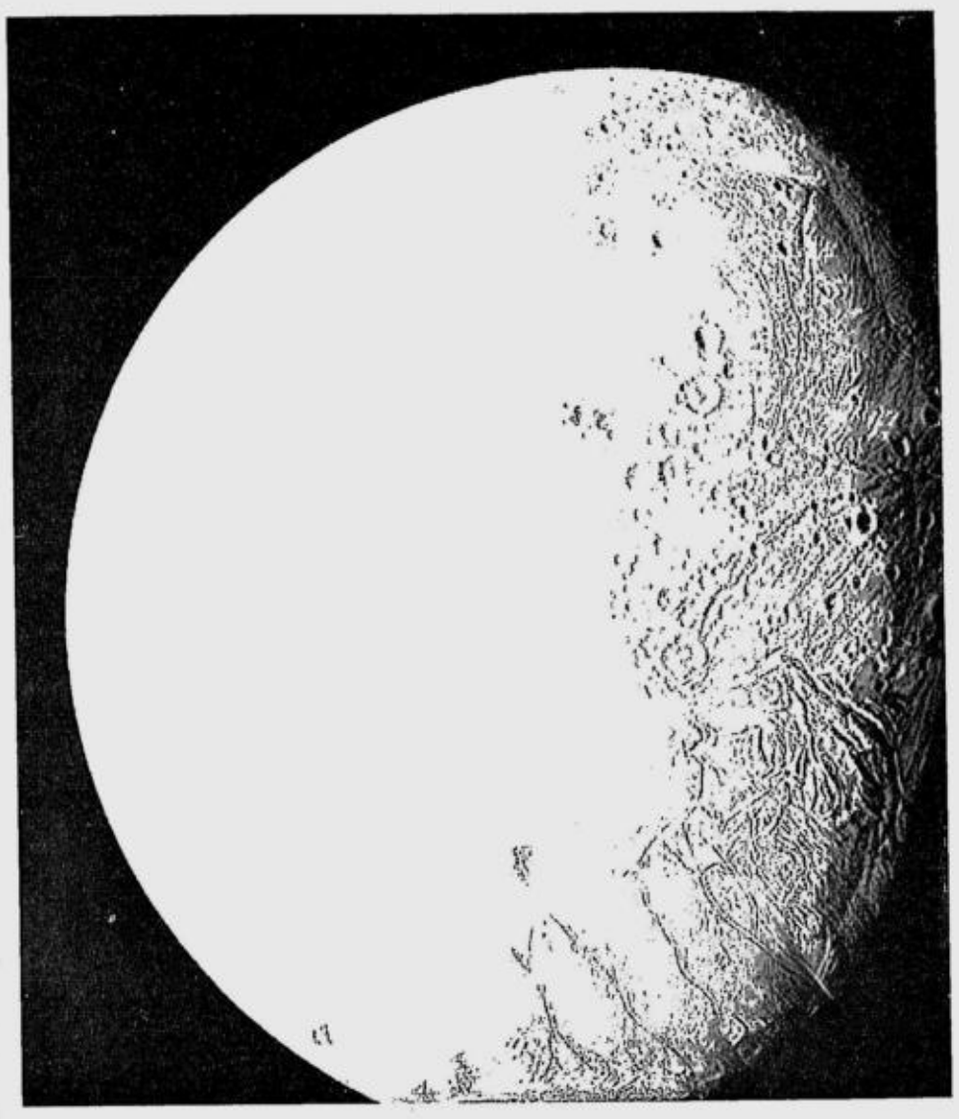
Abe recently sparked outrage by saying there was no evidence Japan directly coerced sex slaves into World War II army brothels—an issue Howard said he would bring up in his summit.

Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer acknowledged some of his compatriots would feel uncomfortable with the pact. But he cited the example of his father, a prisoner of the Japanese for three-and-a-half years in Singapore's notorious Changi prison.

"He sort of took the view that while they treated him badly, his mates were killed—or murdered as he would have put it—but the world moves on," Downer said in a radio interview.

"And he just thought, well, in the end Australia and Japan are just going to have to move on together into the future.

"I suppose I have sort of taken my lead from my dad, really." *AFP*



ERUPTING GEYSERS
This photo taken by the Cassini spacecraft, provided by Nasa, shows the surface of Saturn's moon Enceladus. Scientists believe radioactive decay inside the tiny Saturn moon shortly after it formed billions of years ago may explain why geysers are erupting from the surface on Monday, March 12. AP

BBC correspondent kidnapped in Gaza Strip

GAZA CITY—ARMED MEN KIDNAPPED BBC correspondent Alan Johnston after forcing him from his car in the volatile Gaza Strip on Monday, Palestinian security sources said.

Johnston, a Briton and the BBC's primary journalist in Gaza, is one of the few Western reporters to be permanently based in the increasingly lawless territory. He was snatched from his car in Gaza City.

He had just arrived in Gaza after crossing Erez, the main border post between the territory and Israel, and went to his office in Gaza City where he picked up a car to drive to his house nearby, they said.

Gunmen stopped his car as he headed home, forcing him out and driving off with him, they said.

"We are aware of reports concerning the whereabouts of BBC Gaza correspondent Alan Johnston," the BBC said in a statement issued in London.

"We are currently unable to contact him and are concerned for his safety. We are trying to gather as much information as possible." The broadcaster said Johnston was a "highly experienced and respected reporter" who had been based in Gaza for the past three years.

A spokesperson for the Foreign Office in London said "consular staff in Gaza are checking with the local authorities, but we are unable to confirm anything more at the moment." The Palestinian interior ministry and the presidency ordered all security services and police to search for the missing journalist, while officials slammed the abduction.

Outgoing interior minister Said Siam of Hamas condemned the kidnapping as a "criminal act" and promised to catch those responsible.

The head of the main security service, General Jamal Kayed, said he had put his forces "on maximum alert" and ordered roadblocks to be set up in the coastal strip to try to catch the kidnappers.

Hamas condemned the abduction and demanded that the reporter be released "immediately and without conditions." *AFP*

A THAI villager stands among dead taptim fish at a fish farm along the Chao Phraya river in Ang Thong, north of Bangkok, March 12, prompting fears that factories were polluting the waterway. AFP

Up to 1 million fish found dead in Thai river

BANGKOK—HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF farmed fish have been found dead in one of Thailand's key rivers, the fisheries department said Tuesday, prompting fears that factories were polluting the waterway.

Parts of the central provinces of Ang Thong and Ayutthaya along the Chao Phraya river were officially declared disaster zones Tuesday, after the fish started dying there on Sunday night.

Officials said they were still trying to determine what had caused the deaths of up to one million caged tubtim fish, a type of *tilapia*, at different locations along the river about 100 km north of Bangkok.

Jaranthada Karnsasuta, director general of the fisheries department, said a sudden lack of oxygen in the water killed the fish.

"Oxygen in water is very poor. Some reported zero to 0.5 percent of oxygen in the water, while fish need more than three percent to survive," he told AFP.

He said they were currently investigating two possible explanations—that a sugar boat which capsized earlier this month released toxic byproducts into the river, or that upstream factories had polluted the waterway.

Local villagers and farmers suspect that factories, including one that produces the food additive monosodium glutamate, had released untreated water into the Chao Phraya, which flows down to the capital Bangkok, Jaranthada said.

It was less likely to have been caused by the capsized boat, he said, as the accident happened March 3 and the fish would have been affected earlier.

The Ministry of Agriculture will compensate fish farmers for their losses, which total about 40 million baht ($1.3 million), Jaranthada said. *AFP*

Mexican billionaire pokes fun at Gates

MEXICO CITY—THE WORLD'S third-richest man, Mexican telecom magnate Carlos Slim, poked gentle fun at the philanthropy of Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, and said businessmen can do more good by building solid companies than by "going around like Santa Claus" donating money.

Slim on Monday announced a new $450 million foundation for health research and care—a minor slice of his estimated $49 billion fortune.

But Slim said he had no interest in competing with US tycoons Gates and Buffett, who lead him on the Forbes magazine's list of the world's richest and have donated much larger shares of their fortunes. Slim is gaining rapidly on the two heavyweights with a fortune that grew by $19 billion last year—the largest wealth gain in the past decade tracked by Forbes.

"Our concept is more to accomplish and solve things, rather than giving; that is, not going around like Santa Claus," said Slim, as he cracked jokes, smoked a cigar and outlined business plans at one of his rare news conferences. "Poverty isn't solved with donations."

Slim showed himself as an unrepentant businessman driven by "the taste for competition." He said his own charitable foundations have $4 billion in endowments—but waxed ironic about Buffet's decision to give way his fortune over the next 20 years.

SLIM

"It's very interesting, because he leaves those who are running his affairs the responsibility of being very profitable," Slim said. "If they're inefficient, or don't get real-term returns, they're not going to be running anything."

Microsoft founder Gates, who set up the world's richest charity foundation, has said he believes "that with great wealth comes great responsibility, a responsibility to give back to society."

For Slim, business is a calling, and pretty much the cure for all ills. *AP*

Nepal's premier urges king to quit

KATHMANDU—NEPAL HAS MOVED A STEP closer to ditching its monarchy with the Himalayan nation's premier turning on embattled King Gyanendra and calling for him to quit, analysts and officials said Tuesday.

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, the respected octogenarian architect of Nepal's peace process, on Monday said King Gyanendra should abdicate—a major about-turn for a politician previously seen as sympathetic to the throne.

"The prime minister was the only man in the ruling parties who supported the monarchy and now he has given it up," Rabindra Khanal, a political analyst and professor from Nepal's Tribhuvan University, told AFP.

Koirala had argued Monday that the king, viewed by his supporters as a god-like figure, was trying to undermine a peace deal between the government and the fiercely republican Maoist rebels.

Politicians have already accused the king's allies of stirring a recent wave of deadly ethnic unrest in the south of the country.

The prime minister also said Gyanendra, 59, should have quit last year after protests forced him to relinquish dictatorial powers, state-run Nepal Television reported.

"Even now, a new environment would be created if the king abdicates voluntarily," said the prime minister, who has in the past extolled the virtues of a constitutional monarchy, preferring the system to more radical change.

Gunaraj Luitel, a senior editor from the Kantipur media group, said Koirala's damning comments simply reflected the increasing desire in impoverished Nepal for a republic—or at least a significant rolling back of royal powers.

"He (Koirala) wants to give a clear indication to the king that he needs to remain outside politics and that if he takes part in political activities, his future will be very dark," said Luitel.

"There is a slim chance this monarchy can survive, but there are a vast amount of people who are not in favor of monarchy," the editor said.

According to Khanal, the prime minister and the Nepali Congress Party can also not afford to be out of step with the electorate during an election year.

"There is massive demand for a republic," said the professor. "It could be a move to protect his political party because the Nepali Congress cannot be seen to go against the sentiments of the people."

Local media ran front-page stories about the premier's comments, with the English language Kathmandu Post reporting "Nation on republican path: PM," and the Himalayan Times reporting "Time he gave up the throne, says Koirala."

King Gyanendra's Shah dynasty has a 238-year history, and Nepal's kings have for centuries been revered as incarnations of the Hindu Lord Vishnu, the god of protection.

But the rotund Gyanendra has had a tough five years as king since he was vaulted to the throne by the massacre of his brother and most of the royal family, staged by a drink- and drug-fueled crown prince who later killed himself.

Since the king abandoned his ill-fated attempt at direct rule aimed at crushing the Maoists, he has been accused of abuse of power and has been stripped of his status as head of state.

Even the state bank has decided to remove images of the king from banknotes.

His ultimate fate will soon be decided. In June the country is scheduled to vote in a body that will permanently rewrite the constitution.

For Nepal's Maoists, who have agreed to end their 10-year "People's War" in exchange for a place in government, Koirala's comments have been taken as yet another nail in the coffin of a king they want to see the back of.

"The prime minister's change in stance is very progressive," top Maoist official Dinanath Sharma told AFP, adding that the king should sit up and listen.

"Now it would be wise decision on the king's part if he abdicates from the throne. There should not be any form of monarchy in the country," Sharma said. *AFP*

MOTHER AND CHILD
In this photo provided by the San Diego Zoo, a day old African elephant calf snuggles up to his mother, Litsemba, at the San Diego Zoos Wild Animal Park in Escondido, Calif., Monday, March 12. *AP*

Berlusconi faces new corruption charges

MILAN—FORMER Premier Silvio Berlusconi faced a new trial Tuesday on charges of corruption along with the estranged husband of Britain's culture minister.

The trial—one in a series against Berlusconi for his business dealings in Milan—alleges that Berlusconi in 1997 ordered the payment of at least $600,000 to his codefendant, British lawyer David Mills, in exchange for the lawyer's false testimony in two trials against Berlusconi in the 1990s.

Both deny the allegations. Neither man was expected to appear in court. If convicted, Mills and Berlusconi could be sentenced to between three and eight years in prison, according to prosecutors. *AP*

Exercise boosts brain's power, says US study

WASHINGTON—EXERCISE BOOSTS BRAINpower by building new brain cells in a brain region linked with memory and memory loss, US researchers reported on Monday.

Tests on mice showed they grew new brain cells in a brain region called the dentate gyrus, a part of the hippocampus that is known to be affected in the age-related memory decline that begins around age 30 for most humans.

The researchers used magnetic resonance imaging scans to help document the process in mice—and then used MRIs to look at the brains of people before and after exercise.

They found the same patterns, which suggests that people also grow new brain cells when they exercise.

"No previous research has systematically examined the different regions of the hippocampus and identified which region is most affected by exercise," Dr. Scott Small, a neurologist at Columbia University Medical Center in New York who led the study, said in a statement.

Writing in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, the researchers said they first tested mice.

Brain expert Fred Gage, of the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California, had shown that exercise can cause the development of new brain cells in the mouse equivalent of the dentate gyrus.

The teams worked together to find a way to measure this using MRI, by tracking cerebral blood volume.

"Once these findings were established in mice, we were interested in determining how exercise affects the hippocampal cerebral blood volume maps of humans," they wrote.

They of course could not dissect the brains of people to see if new neurons grew, but they could use MRI to have a peek.

They recruited 11 healthy adults and made them undergo a three-month aerobic exercise regimen.

They did MRIs of their brains before and after. They also measured the fitness of each volunteer by measuring oxygen volume before and after the training program.

Exercise generated blood flow to the dentate gyrus of the people, and the more fit a person got, the more blood flow the MRI detected, the researchers found.

"The remarkable similarities between the exercise-induced cerebral blood volume changes in the hippocampal formation of mice and humans suggest that the effect is mediated by similar mechanisms," they wrote.

"Our next step is to identify the exercise regimen that is most beneficial to improve cognition and reduce normal memory loss, so that physicians may be able to prescribe specific types of exercise to improve memory," Small said. *Reuters*

MAHAL KO ANG PILIPINAS
Tungo sa ganap na pagkabansa

ISA
INSTITUTE FOR SOLIDARITY IN ASIA

THERE IS LIFE AFTER THE 2007 ELECTIONS
Towards Philippines 2030

WE HAVE A DREAM. We dream of being a Filipino people, living under God, building a just and humane society and establishing a government that embodies our ideals and aspirations.

We have a dream. That by 2030 – after one generation – we will realize a society that promotes the common good, conserves and develops our patrimony, and secures the blessings of independence and democracy under the rule of law and a regime of truth, justice, freedom, love, equity and peace.

To make this vision for Philippines 2030 a reality, we have laid out a National Road Map, a strategic plan that articulates how we, as responsible citizens, can work together purposefully, consistently, valiantly and effectively.

We recognize that our future is inextricably connected to our present. It is also about today, and every beaten path we take until 2030.

When we speak of the present, nothing is more compelling than the forthcoming May 2007 elections. How do we ensure that Election 2007 and the political activities leading up to 2010 will propel us toward Philippines 2030?

We are not a political party and we are not advancing the interest of any political party or personality. We are not preparing for Elections 2007 or 2010. We believe these elections will not lead to fundamental change unless drastic measures are taken now .

We are train our sights on 2030 because we believe the changes we must make are so fundamental that they will require a generation to take root. The changes require that we begin thinking and acting not, as individuals or extended families or ethnic groups. The changes we need require us to act on the basis of the common good – as a true nation.

Our vision dictates that we actively participate in this process. This can be achieved by articulating some guidelines for the consideration of our voters and by establishing a process for their continuing political education.

We challenge our leaders – present or potential, local or national – to formulate and execute a strategic program of action that addresses development in its various aspects:

- Values (cultural and educational imperatives)
- Institutions (social and political imperatives)
- Internal Capacity (technical and administrative imperatives)
- Infrastructure (physical and environmental imperatives)
- Economics (financial and developmental imperatives) and
- National (social and community imperatives)

We challenge those that aspire for public office to present a comprehensive long term development agenda - well beyond the term of the office which they seek.

Together, we express what we believe it will take to make the political activities during the forthcoming elections meaningful and relevant to Philippines 2030: one nation under God, one community of responsible citizens who deeply and truly love their country.

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ADVT

SOLAR 1

Oil Recovery Project Begins

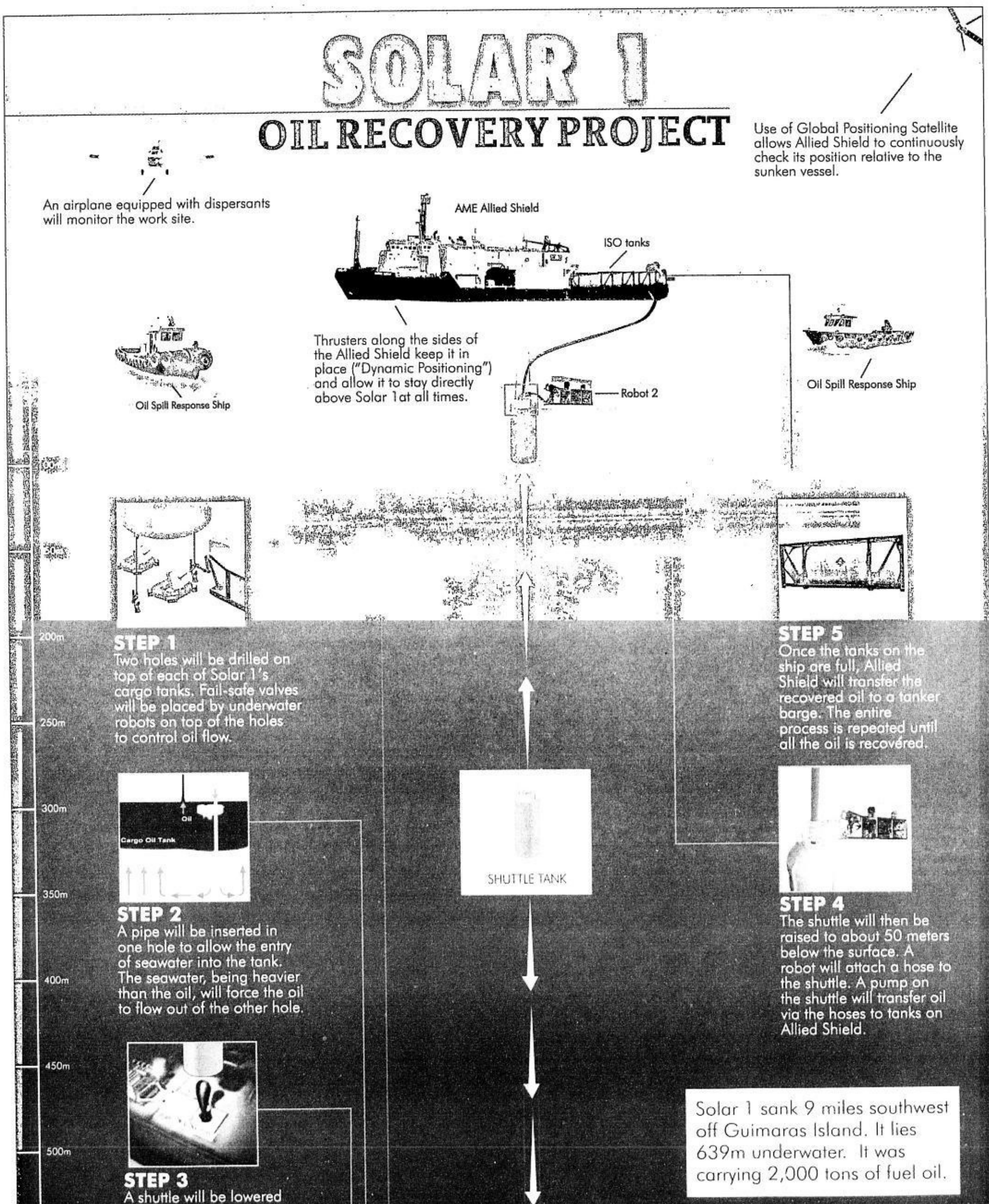
SEVEN MONTHS AFTER THE SINKING OF Solar 1, the oil recovery ship Allied Shield arrived on March 11 in Bacolod City to begin the retrieval of any remaining oil on the sunken vessel. The Allied Shield will be used by Sonsub, an Italian firm specializing in deepwater operations. Sonsub was contracted by the Protection and Indemnity (P&I) Club, insurer of the Solar 1.

This is only the second time in history that such a deep sea oil retrieval operation will be undertaken. Sonsub successfully retrieved 13,500 tons of crude oil without spillage from the tanker Prestige which sank in 10,000 feet of water 240 kilometers from the coast of Spain. Solar 1, meanwhile, is at a depth of 2,100 feet and was carrying about 2,000 tons of fuel oil when it sank.

"We made a commitment to Guimaras to do whatever it takes to restore it to normalcy and we are keeping that promise"

"Today marks another milestone in our collective efforts to address the environmental impact of the sinking of Solar 1. With the arrival of Allied Shield, the final phase of the clean-up can commence," Petron Chairman Nicasio I. Alcantara said. "The retrieval of oil from Solar 1 will finally end all speculation whether there is still oil on the vessel and more importantly, ease the apprehensions of people from the Visayas."

Petron spearheaded clean-up efforts in Guimaras wherein employee volunteers and local residents teamed up to clean about 140 kilometers of affected shoreline collecting 6,000 metric tons of oily debris. The company also conducted numerous relief and medical missions in affected baranggays benefiting thousands of Guimarasnons. At present, Petron has initiated livelihood programs in Guimaras.



"We made a commitment to Guimaras to do whatever it takes to restore it to normalcy and we are keeping that promise," Alcantara added.

During the retrieval operation, thrusters along the sides of the Allied Shield will keep it in place ("Dynamic Positioning") and allow it to stay directly above Solar 1 at all times. Use of the Global Positioning System allows Allied Shield to continuously check its position relative to the sunken vessel.

Two Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) will be deployed to work on the sunken vessel.

"The extraction of oil from Solar 1 will be relatively easier than the Prestige which sank in much harsher environmental conditions. Additionally, everything that will be done in this oil recovery project has been already done before," Sonsub Project Director Robin Galleti said.

"We will be operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week to hasten the recovery of any trapped oil in Solar 1. We wish to assure all concerned that we have several measures in place to ensure a fail-safe operation. In addition, we have contingency plans in place to cover the unlikely event of any oil release," Galleti added.

Contingency plans include oil spill response tugboats that will be deployed for the duration of the retrieval operations. These boats are equipped with oil dispersants, oil skimmers for the mechanical recovery of oil and spill booms for containment. One aircraft, which has airborne dispersant capability, will continuously be monitoring the area. The Philippine Coast Guard will establish a 1 kilometer exclusive zone around the Allied Shield.

The operation is expected to last around 20 days and the cost is estimated to be USD 6 million.

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ **Warriors** end Mavs' run /A35

SPORTS

www.inquirer.net/sports

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■ **Roddick,** Nadal continue march /A35

Coca-Cola eyes solo PBA lead

PUREFOODS' Jesse King blocks the shot of Coca Cola's Anthony Johnson (23) in their game Friday. ROMY HOMILLADA

WHETHER IT IS HOLDING ON TO WIN after blowing big leads or eating up opponents' margins to score come-from-behind victories, Coca-Cola has shown a knack for Houdini acts.

STANDINGS	W	L
Red Bull	2	0
Coca-Cola	2	0
Alaska	2	0
Air21	1	0
Welcoat	1	1
Talk 'N Text	0	1
Ginebra	0	1
San Miguel	0	1
Purefoods	0	2
Sta. Lucia	0	2

GAMES TODAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:35 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs. Coca-Cola
7:20 p.m.—San Miguel Beer vs. Air21

These close brushes have put the Tigers on top of the PBA Fiesta Cup eliminations thus far, a spot they hope to keep when they slug it out with the depleted Talk 'N Text Phone Pals.

Game time is 4:35 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum with the odds favoring the Tigers, who are coming off victories over newcomer Welcoat in the inaugurals and Purefoods last week.

Anthony Johnson has so far played impressively for the Tigers and coach Binky Favis believes that his import still has a lot more to give as the tournament wears on.

Johnson debuted with 29 points against the Dragons and followed this up with 33 opposite the Tender Juicy Giants. But it was John Arigo who did the mop-up job against Purefoods by shooting all of his 13 fourth-quarter points in Coca-Cola's closing 20-6 run.

And while the Tigers sport a roster untouched by the national team, the Phone Pals will try to continue making do without stars Asi Taulava, Ren-Ren Ritualo and Jimmy Alapag.

Air21 also tries to remain unscathed later when the Express, who brought down mighty Sta. Lucia, shoot for a second straight win against a San Miguel Beer side severely lacking dependable manpower.

The Beermen will be without National team appointees Danny Seigle and Dondon Hontiveros and the injured Danny Ildefonso and Lordy Tugade. Compounding their woes is the inability of import Vidal Massiah to post big numbers.

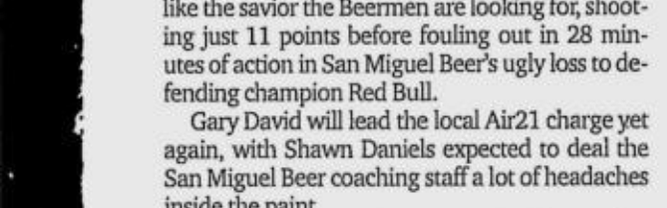
Massiah is not San Miguel Beer's original import pick. He got the call a couple of days before opening day after Kelly Whitney was measured to be over the 6-foot-6 height limit.

He was lackluster in his debut and did not look like the savior the Beermen are looking for, shooting just 11 points before fouling out in 28 minutes of action in San Miguel Beer's ugly loss to defending champion Red Bull.

Gary David will lead the local Air21 charge yet again, with Shawn Daniels expected to deal the San Miguel Beer coaching staff a lot of headaches inside the paint.

Niño Canaleta and Wynne Arboleda are also expected to play key roles for the Express, who barely missed making the finals here last year, also with Daniels, opposite eventual second placer Purefoods.

Interim San Miguel coach Biboy Ravanes is left with Olsen Racela, Wesley Gonzales, Christian Calaguio and rookie LA Tenorio as his primary offensive weapons. *Musong R. Castillo*



Jaro-Nagal fight headlines revived Fiesta Fistiana

REIGNING PHILIPPINE LIGHT-FLYWEIGHT champion Sonny Boy Jaro stakes his crown against challenger Alfred Nagal in the mainer of the huge PSA-Fiesta Fistiana fight card on April 29 at the Rajah Sulayman Park in Manila.

The fund-raising event is being revived this year not only to promote local boxing but also to help destitute and retired boxers.

The Philippine Sportswriters Association yesterday announced the restaging of the boxing card, which it last held in early 2000, in coordination with the Manila Sports Council under chair Arnold "Ali" Atienza.

Funds to be raised from the boxing promotion will be turned over to the Games and Amusements Board (GAB) for distribution to destitute and needy boxers.

But, instead of giving out cash, as had been the practice in the past, the GAB will dole out livelihood projects this time.

"*May mga* criteria *kaming sinusunod d'yan* (We follow certain criteria) like medical screening, etc," said Buhain. "And I assure you, *walang palakasan dito* (We don't play favorites here)."

"*Mas magandang kabuhayan ang ibigay natin sa kanila* (It would be better if we gave them livelihood)," the 34-year-old Atienza said at the program launch during yesterday's PSA Forum at Pantalan Restaurant in Manila.

"We've seen many boxers in the past who received cash but failed to improve their plight a bit. We'll just give them guidance and support. I think they will appreciate the PSA's assistance more."

PSA president Aldrin Cardona of the Tribune thanked the GAB and Masco for coming out with the livelihood plan.

"*Sabi nga nila* (Someone said), instead of giving them fish, why not teach them how to catch fish," he said.

GAB chair Eric Buhain, accompanied by the agency's boxing chief, Dr. Nasser Cruz, to the public sports program sponsored by Pagcor, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and Masco, said his office will screen out potential beneficiaries of the charity drive.

Boxing hero Manny Pacquiao fought in the main event of the 1999 PSA-Fiesta Fistiana held at the Elorde Sports Complex.

Fresh off his dethronement as World Boxing Council (WBC) flyweight champion by Medgoen Lukchaopormasak of Thailand, the then 21-year-old Pacquiao moved to the super-bantamweight class and scored a second-round knockout of Reynante Jamili.

Former world champion Gerry Peñalosa was also featured in the 2001 Fiesta Fistiana held at the Casino Filipino Ampitheater.

This year, Jaro banners the boxing card featuring six bouts, including two title tiffs.

Atienza, through his father Mayor Lito Atienza, provided the venue, security and cash prizes, with veteran boxing man Bomber Pamiloza promoting the card.

"Mr. Pamiloza has long been absent in boxing and this marks his return to boxing promotion," said Cardona. "The Fiesta Fistiana is not for just a single purpose, but also to help boxing here in the country."

The rest of the fight card features the RP super-bantamweight title class between champion Alex Escaner and either top contender Bernabe Concepcion or RP no. 2 Rey Salim, John Rae Verano versus Eric Rapada, Jun Talape against Ariel Delgado, Leonardo Doronio opposite Jaypee Ignacio and Jurland Ceniza against Francis Borreros.

Solar pays Pacquiao P38M for TV rights

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

IT'S HARVEST TIME FOR MANNY PACQUIAO.

Just for one fight, Solar Sports will pay the world pound-for-pound superstar a whopping $800,000 (P38.4 million) for the right to air his April 14 showdown with Mexican Jorge Solis at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas.

The juicy deal was confirmed by Rex "Wakee" Salud, a close associate and adviser to the national boxing hero, in an interview yesterday.

"That's just for free TV—that does not include the upsides on closed circuits nationwide," Salud said.

He said Pacquiao will earn more money after all closed-circuit revenues shall have been added.

But Pacquiao's lawyer Franklin Gacal, in an interview with Philboxing.com, shrugged off the figures as *chismis* (hearsay), and did not cite the exact figures paid by Solar Sports.

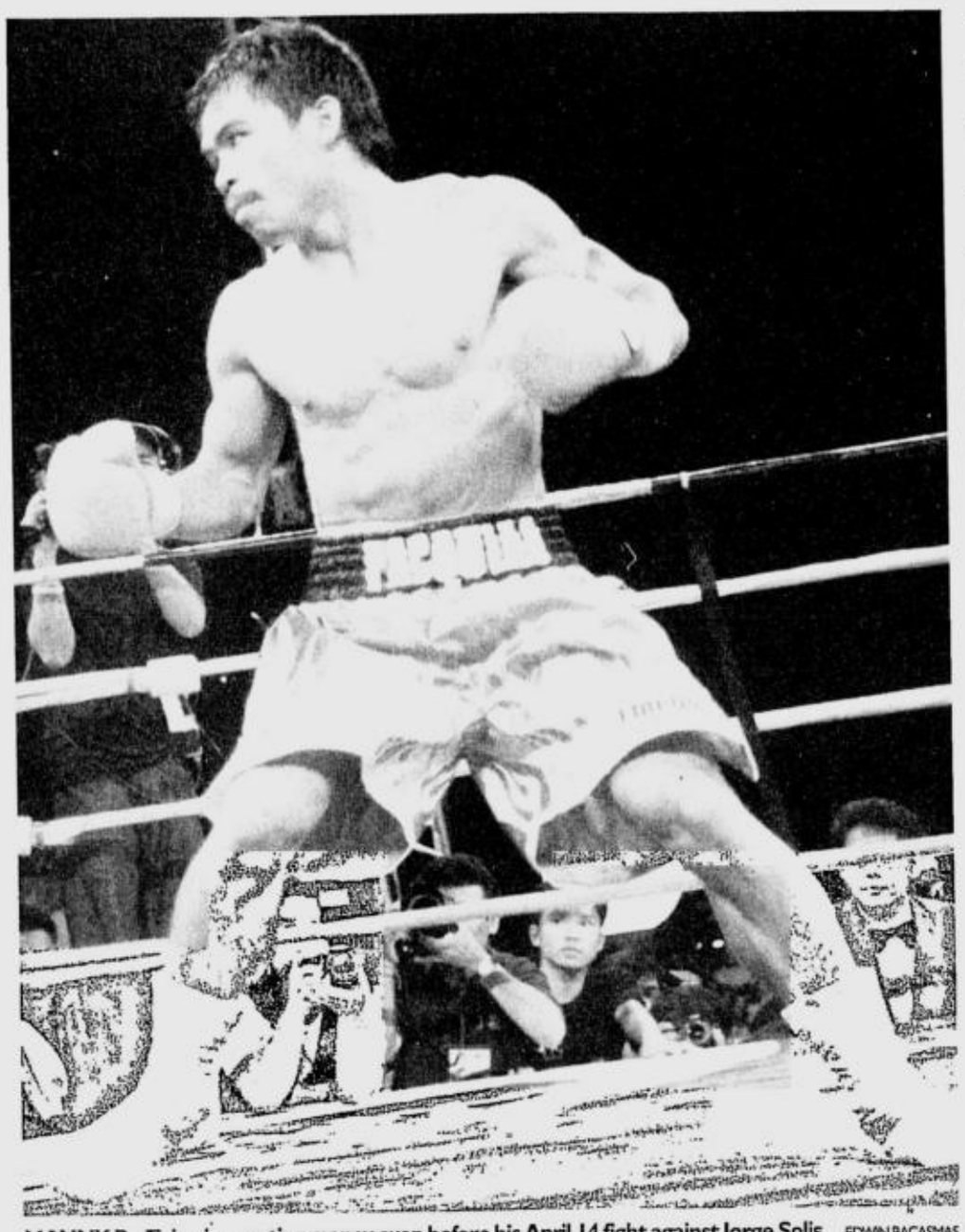
Television giant ABS-CBN, according to INQUIRER sources, did not match Solar's offer as the price was already four times higher than their previous cash-out for a Pacquiao fight.

ABS-CBN, however, can claim to having clinched the better cards: the March 18 Golden Boy Promotions card featuring Marco Antonio Barrera versus Juan Manuel Marquez plus Gerry Peñalosa versus Daniel Ponce De Leon.

ABS-CBN's biggest catch, meanwhile, is the May 5 superbout between Oscar De la Hoya and Floyd Mayweather, which dwarfs the Pacquiao-Solis fight in terms of magnitude and worldwide impact.

Solis, the latest in the series of Mexicans seeking the scalp of Pacquiao, enjoys height and reach advantages but is a prohibitive underdog in the Alamodome encounter.

The unbeaten Mexican stands at 5 feet 10 1/2 and is 4 inches taller than Pacquiao. According to available data from the Internet, Solis also enjoys a 2-inch edge in reach.



MANNY Pacquiao is counting money even before his April 14 fight against Jorge Solis. EDWIN BACASMAS

POC pledges to iron out kinks in next Olympic fest

By June Navarro

DON'T EXPECT EVERYTHING TO BE PERfect on your first try.

Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) chair Robert Aventajado said yesterday the Olympic body would try to do better in staging the Philippine Olympic Festival.

Aventajado admitted that the first running of the POC's talent identification vehicle encountered a series of troubles when it was held in Vigan last week.

In its next stop in Marikina City for the Central-Northern Luzon qualifying, improvements in areas which the POC had overlooked will be put in place, especially the communication lines between the organizers and local government units.

Sports officials from some LGUs like La Union, Ilocos Norte and host Ilocos Sur raised concerns about the organizers' failure to inform them about entrance fees in some events.

A Pangasinan official also expressed disappointment over the alleged player-switching in swimming after Marc Artemius Paderon, 10, replaced his nine-year-old brother, Matthew Joseph, for La Union in a boys' freestyle event.

La Union made the biggest haul of 29 gold medals out of the 79 medals staked in the pool.

"These things happened because we are just starting out," said Aventajado, who also sits as chair of the POF, whose main objective is to discover talents for the 2012 London Olympics.

Pacquiao could spoil his own Texas picnic

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

MANNY PACQUIAO CAME READY TO BE alarmed.

He instead ended up very amused.

There was not a hint of a yellow light last week after Pacquiao finally agreed to watch a fight video of his next opponent.

The unbeaten Jorge Solis, lanky and slow of feet, also promises to be an easy target.

* * *

Pacquiao scanned the screen for possible problems.

But the boxing superstar no longer bothered to sit through the entire five rounds that it took Solis to stop his foe.

What loomed in the less than five minutes that Pacquiao had agreed to observe was a lean, shaky wanderer.

The 5-foot-10 Solis was a tall tree perfectly cut out for Pacquiao's buzz-saw slashes.

* * *

Well, at least Pacquiao tried and managed to keep his mouth shut on what he readily thought of Solis.

But two invited reporters, the Bulletin's Nick Giongco and Abac Cordero of the Star, detailed the prevailing sentiment among Pacquiao and his Filipino handlers.

"He (Solis) can't run away, this is the opponent," Cordero quoted Buboy Fernandez, who supposedly pointed to the Solis fight video inside his pocket.

Added Fernandez, Pacquiao's longtime friend and chief Pinoy handler: "Solis is just there standing. I'm sure he's now learning how to run. But Manny will get him."

* * *

No, Pacquiao was not saying Solis would not be a worthy opponent.

But in the exacting, brutal world of prizefighting, Solis could easily be classified as a picnic package.

At least this was what surfaced after Pacquiao had peered through the style and worth of his next adversary.

Now, hold it, please.

Unfortunately, there's one developing flaw in his preparations that Pacquiao handlers may fail to keep under wraps come fight time.

Pacquiao can no longer hope to be a hundred percent.

Cram hard as he could, Pacquiao can't be as fit as he had been against Erik Morales in their second encounter when he faces Solis on April 14.

* * *

In fact, Pacquiao's no-show for the scheduled start of the strict training program at the Wild Card gym in Hollywood had sent conditioning guru Justine Fortune frowning in dismay.

Freddie Roach, chief ingredient in Pacquiao's superiority and success, is also no longer on top of the program prepared for the Solis encounter.

In fact, there was nothing clear on who between Fortune and Buboy Fernandez would act as chief handler if Roach, stuck with Oscar de la Hoya in Puerto Rico, failed to make it to Texas on April 14.

* * *

Well, this may not be worth telling, but Pacquiao and his *cuadrilla* must be warned that the five-round video of Solis in one-sided action was anything but comprehensive.

Solis also has the craft to make things happen inside the ring.

This early, expect the Solis camp to devise ways to push Pacquiao past the sixth round, into the second half, when there's the likelihood Pacquiao could start to tire down.

The Pacman could indeed be at his strongest, but his wind bag would hardly be perfect, no thanks to all the distractions and the cheap thrills he had to indulge in.

Solis, 27, doesn't say it but he definitely has a clearer clue on how to offset Pacquiao's strength and score an upset.

Solis (32-0) knows Pacquiao is soft and beatable somewhere inside there.

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Philsugin Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Supply, Delivery, Installation and Commissioning of Two (2) units 60-ton capacity Electronic Truckscales

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA) now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the Supply, Delivery, Installation and Commissioning of two (2) units 60-ton capacity Electronic Truckscale (Goods for short), with an Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of PESOS: SIX MILLION FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND (P6,400,000.00) only, at the following project sites: NFA Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya and NFA Sorsogon, Sorsogon. Delivery of the Goods is required within 120 days from issuance of Notice to Proceed.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information and inspect the Bidding Documents at the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat, Mr. Piolito C. Santos, Asst. Dept. Manager, DMO and/or Ms. Ma. Dolores Fernandez, Division Chief, DMO, NFA 4th F Philsugin Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City, Tel. No. 453-3900 local 4222 or 454-1214, from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be obtained by interested Bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee, in cash, in the amount of PESOS: Ten Thousand only (P10,000.00).

The Bidding Schedule is as follows:

Issuance of Eligibility Requirements and Bidding Documents	March 14 to 21, 2007
Pre-bidding Conference	March 21, 2007, 9:00 AM
Deadline for the Submission of Bids	April 03, 2007, 9:00 AM
Opening of Bids	April 03, 2007 (immediately after Submission)

The venue for the Pre-bidding conference and Submission and Opening of Bids shall be at the NFA Board Room, 6th F. Philsugin Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City.

All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of Cash, Manager's Check or Cashier's Check, in the amount equivalent to five percent (5%) of the Approve Budget Contract. Late Bids will not be accepted.

It is required that prospective bidders must have a single largest contract – completed within the last five (5) years and similar to the contract to bid – whose value adjusted to current prices must be at least fifty percent (50%) of the approved budget for the contract.

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) LUDOVICO J. JARINA
Acting Deputy Administrator for Operations and Chairman, BAC

(PDI – March 14, 2007)

Miller's brilliance sparks Alaska surge

WILLIE MILLER FACES TWO PROBLEMS IN his life right now—one on the court and the other off it.

The one on the court, he has done a wonderful job of solving. And he feels confident that the other one will turn out just fine.

Hoping to plug holes in an Alaska team eyeing a strong showing in the PBA Fiesta Cup, Miller has made the shots and produced the numbers that have helped the Aces rise to a 2-0 record.

Doing it all for the Aces has made Miller the unanimous choice as the PBA Press Corps' Accel-Talk N Text Player of the Week for the period of March 4-11.

Miller's 10-foot jumper put a damper on Barangay Ginebra's ring ceremony last Sunday as he steered the Aces to a victory over the Kings.

"He'll really be our scoring import in this conference," said Aces coach Tim Cone. "And when it comes down to the stretch, when it gets tight, Willie will come out and make the big shot."

Miller's heroics capped a 26-point, four-rebound, five-assist night, which came after a game-high 27-point, two-rebound, three-assist output four days earlier, when Alaska defeated the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals, 98-94.

"He's very special," said Cone. *Musong Castillo*

Davao kicks off triathlon series March 18

TRIATHLON GOES FULL BLAST starting this Sunday when Davao City hosts the kick-off leg of the 2007 Speedo-National Age Group Triathlon Series with about 100 athletes seeing action.

The grand finals of the event won last year by George Vilog and Anna Gatmaitan, now members of the national triathlon training team, is slated in October at the Ayala Alabang Village in Muntinlupa City.

Four other legs of the Speedo-NGAT Series have been scheduled by the Triathlon Association of the Philippines (Trap) in Danao City in Cebu; The Lakeshore in Pampanga; Los Baños, Laguna; and Cagayan de Oro City.

"This series has provided us with talents for the national training team," said Trap president Tom Carrasco Jr. "Starting this year, we are expanding the program by including a kids' triathlon which is part of our talent identification program."

Carrasco also credited the Triathlon Association of Davao (Triad), headed by its president Maritess del Rosario, for vigorously promoting triathlon.

"This is the kind of partnership we are looking for in other regions," he said.

Metro Manila-based triathletes may call Vic Sai at 082-2224595 or 082-2242848 for inquiries. *JW Payo*

PBL readies Champions Cup squad

By Jasmine W. Payo

IT WILL NOT BE JUST THE PRO LEAGUE SENDING AN ALL-STAR squad to the international arena.

Eager to play a part in announcing the Philippines' return to international competition, the PBL has drawn up a pool from which a team will be formed to represent the country in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Seaba) Champions Cup next month in Jakarta, Indonesia.

A selection made up of the core of back-to-back champion Harbour Centre is being formed to compete in the regional tournament set April 9 to 14. The tournament is different from the Seaba tilt the PBA will send a team to in that it is mostly participated in by reinforced club teams.

The club teams invited to the tournament are usually the champions of their respective home leagues.

According to PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad, the composition of the team still needs the approval of BAP-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas president Manny V. Pangilinan.

"I plan to elevate it to MVP in two days' time," said Trinidad.

Harbour Centre, the 2006 Unity Cup and 2007 Silver Cup titleholder, initially offered to send its entire team to the Seaba Champions Cup after the RP squad composed of PBA mainstays decided to skip the tournament.

"We're hoping to finalize the (proposed) team soon," said Harbour Centre chief executive officer Mikee Romero.

CRUZ

CASTRO

DUNCIL

LANETE

QUIÑAHAN

Assured of slots are Harbour Centre stars JC Intal, Jason Castro, Jojo Duncil, Silver Cup Finals Most Valuable Player Chico Lanete and Finals Pivotal Player Jonathan Fernandez.

Also being eyed are Marvin Cruz and Patrick Cabahug of Toyota Balintawak, JR Quiñahan of Mail and More, Doug Kramer of Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala and 6-foot-8 Nigerian Sam Ekwe of Magnolia.

The tournament permits teams to field in two imports each, thus allowing Ekwe, the reigning NCAA MVP and Rookie of the Year, to possibly suit up for the squad.

Toyota Balintawak head coach Louie Alas and Henkel Sista mentor Caloy Garcia are also being eyed to join the coaching staff.

The Jakarta meet is the qualifier for the Fiba-Asia Champions Cup that will be held in Iran this September.

"Chino and I are doing everything for our country to have a strong chance to get the championship in Jakarta," said Romero, treasurer in the PBL board.

The RP squad mentored by Chot Reyes has already finalized its training and tournament schedule, which includes a two-week basketball boot camp in the United States, a 10-day cage sojourn in Europe, the Seaba Championship on May 21 to 24 in Thailand, the Qatar Invitational tournament in June and the four-nation Manila Invitational tournament in July.

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Champ says Gerry stands no chance

DE LEON: Looking forward to Boom Boom

MEXICAN WBO SUPER BANTAM champ Daniel Ponce de Leon seems to be so sure he will come out victorious against Gerry Peñalosa this Saturday (Sunday in Manila) that he is now talking about a possible bout with another Filipino prospect Rey 'Boom Boom' Bautista.

De Leon will defend his title against Pe'alosa in a 12-round scrap underneath the Marco Antonio Barrera-Juan Manuel Marquez card aptly dubbed "Fearless.'

ABS-CBN will air the fights live starting at 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sunday, with a replay on the same day 7 p.m. at Studio 23 and on Monday at 2 to 6 p.m. on Studio 23.

In an interview with Boxingconfidential.com, De Leon said he was not worried of Peñalosa's southpaw stance, and had no doubt he would come out victorious over the tough Filipino.

"I am very confident in my conditioning and preparation," the Mexican bragged. "I've studied my opponent very well. He has many good qualities. However, with my strategy and the weapons I possess, I feel I will break him down little by little and punish him severely."

De Leon's trainer Mario Yuca Morales also bragged this match would not pass eight rounds.

"Peñalosa looks really, really small," Morales said in an interview with Asian Journal. "I don't think his legs can keep up with Ponce's punching power."

De Leon said after taking care of Peñalosa, he will honor his mandatory obligation by facing Bautista whom he described as a "young guy with a lot of fortitude who likes to come forward throwing a lot of punches."

"I feel it will be a tough fight, tougher than my fight this Saturday, said De Leon."

Meanwhile, Peñalosa's former manager Rex 'Wakee' Salud said in an interview yesterday that De Leon versus Peñalosa will play out as 'a very explosive fight.'

"I think this will be the best fight on the card," Salud stressed. "This will be very tough for both fighters. But I am confident Gerry can pull off an upset."

Salud added that Gerry should make sure he has the stamina to go full 12 rounds against a much bigger guy.

"It's not like De Leon is bigger but no good, he is bigger and also good. Gerry should not run out of steam, and his legs should be tough. This will be war," added Salud, who is flying to the US this week to be at ringside for the fight.

Peñalosa, accompanied by some kin, friends and Filipino fighter Diosdado Gabi, arrived in Las Vegas yesterday after an almost six-hour trip from Los Angeles. Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

PEÑALOSA: Should not run out of steam

Spring-Tagaytay nips MP Gensan

TAGAYTAY CITY—SPRING COOKING OIL-TAGAYTAY RALLIED TO subdue MP Pacman Gensan, 70-63, Monday and take the solo lead in the 2007 NBC National Cup basketball tournament at the packed Tolentino Sports Center here.

Former pro Marlon Legaspi scored seven of his 14 points in the payoff period to power the Cooking Oil Master of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and league EVP Mayor Bambol Tolentino to their second straight win in as many games.

Earlier, Mayor Sammy Co's Pagadian Explorers nipped first-day winner Quezon Villa Anita, 78-75, to level their record at 1-1.

Manny Pacquiao's Gensan Warriors appeared headed for their first win when they controlled the match three-fourths of the way after surging to a 20-6 first quarter lead.

But the 6-foot-5 Legaspi, who played for Shell and San Miguel in the PBA, sparked an 11-2 Spring windup to deal the Warriors their second straight setback.

"I challenged Marlon (Legaspi) to step up as Rolly (Menor) ate him alive in the first half," said Spring coach Efren "Yong" Garcia.

Legaspi responded well and together with Jeff Tajonera, who hit two triples in the final canto, overcame Pacquiao's charges.

Veterans Mike Orquillas, Maui Huelar and Melvin Mamaclay provided the big shots in the clutch to hold off the fierce rally of Gov. Wilfrido Enverga's Quezon cagers.

The scores:

PAGADIAN 78—Mamaclay 14, Daja 13, Saludsod 11, Orquillas 11, Villaver 10, Sinco 7, Quilo 6, Huelar 4, Ayuk 2, Arquero 0, Pamaran 0.

QUEZON 75—Gahol 22, Buenaventura 14, Mendoza 8, Vilar 8, De Guia 6, Malonzo 4, Drio 4, Gonzales 4, Agapito 3, Veranga 2.

Quarters: 18-13, 44-39, 56-54, 78-75.

SPRING 70—Legaspi 14, Reyes 11, Mallari 10, Tajonera 9, Salud 6, Cenita 6, Marquez 4, Regalado 4, Bolocon 2, Barnson 2, Munoz 2.

GENSAN 63—Menor 15, Tadena 12, Medalla 11, Coronado 8, Locsin 6, Recustodio 3, Dennison 3, Mejorada 0, Callo 0, Sumangpon 0, Celiz 0.

Quarters: 12-22, 28-38, 49-55, 70-63.

FINE FORM: Nicole Vaidisova of the Czech Republic hits to Ahsha Rolle of the US at the Pacific Life Open. Vaidisova won, 6-3, 4-1. REUTERS

Berkeley School forges title duel with Mt. Carmel

BAGUIO CITY—BERKELEY School set up a championship showdown with Our Lady of Mount Carmel Montessori after both institutions came out triumphant Sunday in the 2007 Cherifer Tangkad Sagad Basketball Tournament here at the Eastern College gym.

Mikey Lopez scored 5 points to lead Berkeley School over St. Louis Laboratory Elementary School, 13-7, and Reynaldo Daul tallied 7 markers to key Our Lady of Mount Carmel Montessori's 18-13 victory past Lucban Elementary School.

The Berkeley School of coach Al Astidillo thus disputes the North Luzon trophy of the Cherifer boys' 12-under 5-on-5 hoopfest against the Mark Angelo Cacutan-mentored Our Lady of Mount Carmel Montessori.

Berkeley School, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Montessori, Lucban School and St. Louis Laboratory Elementary School topped their groups in the round-robin preliminary stage to gain their respective semifinal slots in the event support supported by Adidas.

The Baguio leg of the Cherifer Tangkad Sagad Basketball Tournament is being supervised by tournament director Edmundo Badolato. Organized by Bernard Ocampo and Cherifer events coordinator Macky Pablo, the event attracted 20 schools.

SPORTSWATCH

Garcia rules MCC 1950 below active chess

SECOND SEED GARRY GARCIA OF RTU DOWNED NO. 8 ROBERT CACHO IN 45 moves of a Ruy Lopez in the sixth and final round to top the March edition of MCC 1950 below active chess held over the weekend at the Upper 2F of St. Francis Square in Mandaluyong City. Garcia posted 5.5 points on five wins and one draw to beat No. 9 Mari Joseph Turqueza who split the point with No. 23 Emmanuel Emperado and finished with 5 points. Emperado wound up in a tie for 3rd-4th places with 4.5 points along with Aldrin Malibiran of De La Salle-Dasmariñas.

Darts championship starts Saturday

THE COUNTRY'S FINEST DARTERS ARE HEADED FOR A SHOWDOWN AS THE Philmasters Darts Championship 2007 (PDC07) kicks off Saturday at the Pearl Billiards Bar in Parañaque City. "More than the singles title and the prize money, the prospects of making the national team for the World Cup will surely motivate darters to give their best," said Darts Council of the Philippines president lawyer Andrew Arrieta. Call DCP secretary general Steve Dortotheo at 0917 816-10-01.

Manila Bay Sea Sports Fest '07 March 24-25

THOUSANDS OF LOCAL AND FOREIGN TOURISTS WILL AGAIN FLOCK TO THE baywalk along Roxas Boulevard when the Manila Broadcasting Company, the City of Manila and the Philippine Coast Guard mount the 6th Manila Bay Sea Sports Festival 2007. The festival will be highlighted by the *banca* competition in two categories: stock race and formula race. Also featured are dragon boat racing, sailing, beach volleyball, and wall climbing competition. To cap the event are the awards night, a free concert and a fashion show.

SMART stages Dota tournament

FOLLOWING THE SUCCESS OF THE COUNTER STRIKE NETWORKING GAMING tournament held recently for its employees, SMART Communications Inc. will stage another gaming event—the Defense of the Ancient (Dota) Tournament. The competition is open to all interested network game enthusiasts and will be held at the SMART Internet Zone on Ayala Avenue. The tournament, comprised of 32 teams, started on Monday and will run up to April 25. The event takes place Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. For inquiries, call 511-3450.

Fatman derby round two at Pasay today

THE SECOND ROUND ELIMINATIONS OF FATMAN AND MIKKO 6-COCK DERBY takes centerstage at 5 p.m. today at the Pasay City Cockpit. Each participant will receive a DVD player from Taiwan, said host Pepito Ngo. The guaranteed prize rose to more than P2 million due to the big number of entries. Fifteen participants out of 82 who competed on Monday's opening round took the early lead after posting two wins each. The championship round unwraps on Friday. Meanwhile, participants in the NFGB National Bullstag Derby (March 17) must only field bullstags banded for the 2006 National Bakbakan. For inquiries, call 843-1890.

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Firehouse (5), Sandok (4), Awesome Power (2), Aim For Gold (3)

Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Quick Play (8), Real Tough (6), Carmelita (5), Atribida /Nitoy Gritt (4), Alam Mo Na Yan (3)

Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Beautiful Jaeda (7), Master Professor/Richie Rich (5), Astimegoesby (4), Lord Of The Ring (6)

Race 4—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Run Like D'Wind (5), Friendly Fire (7), House of Riches (3), Chabacana (11), Bloodline (8), Isla Clipper (10)

Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Arbiter (8), Nico's Incharge (7), Dulce My Love (3), Bom's Bom's (5), Premiere Act (1)

Race 6—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Tellmenolies (3), Lord Elgene (9), Farragut's Order (6), Speed Admiral (7), Ideal Gaze (2), Bull Rock (8)

Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Selectee (9), Blue Sheikh (7), Fair Urduja (8), Archer (2), Pristine Water (6)

Race 8—(Super 6/Art/Tri)—Dashing (2), Ocean Cookie (12), Southern Prince (11), Take Ten (8), Pabilic Express (9), Harry Peak (10)

Sports gold rush open to pint-sized prospectors, but...

COMMENTARY

Percy D. Della

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA—WE CAN wait for our homegrown basketball stars to grow as tall and massive as Shaquille O'Neal, sprout winged feet like Michael Jordan's and develop a third or fourth eye like Steve Nash to export them to the National Basketball Association.

But then we could be waiting until 12th of never. And that, as the ditty goes is "a long, long time."

Or we can start paying attention to the little people—professional athletes other than spoiled basketball stars.

Pronto.

I am into a basketball bitching frame of mind yet again while watching a new pint-sized sensation from the Philippines emerge into the American sporting scene this weekend.

Jockey Lyndon Guce, in only his second week of riding at Los Alamitos racetrack near Los Angeles, has notched six victories so far.

Last Sunday, Lyndon rode back-to-back wins in the fifth and six races of a nine-race card.

Newly arrived from the Philippines, Lyndon, and brother Ramon, Los Al's current thoroughbred riding king, drive home a point: Pint-sized Filipino athletes, showered with generous motivation and support—are the ones who can hack it on the world stage.

Now.

Please, banish the thought of your favorite homegrown PBA hero suddenly running the court against the likes of O'Neal, Nash and company.

That's like wishing for pigs to fly, for the sun to rise from the west.

We can nurture more champion jockeys, boxers, golfers and pool artists. There's gold in them thar professional sports—particularly in America.

And the rush is also wide open for prospecting tennis and baseball players–the latter the focus of Major League scouts scouring the world in search of natural talent.

If only our sports landscape did not resemble ground zero most of the time.

But basketball—the wrong team sports we're hooked on has dropped the bomb.

The fireball that is basketball has incinerated baseball and tennis and the other athletic disciplines that best fit our build, ability and disposition.

It is pointless to stress the futility of our love affair with basketball enough.

However, so long as the *masa* remain beaten silly by the basketball bug, sports leaders will play dumb and go along with the politics of the game.

We could be waiting until 12th of never.

And that, as the ditty goes is "a long, long time."

***

Is the Oscar de La Hoya-Floyd Mayweather Jr. tiff the most anticipated pay-per-view event of the year?

Not by a long shot.

Brawls put up by World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) and Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) will not be counted out.

Matter of fact, WWE and UFC are expecting more revenue this year than erstwhile pay-per-view giant Home Box Office (HBO).

HBO with De La Hoya as its main draw earned $177 million in pay-per-view sales last year, while the WWE and the upstart UFC raked in $200 million each, according to AP.

UFC specializes in mixed martial arts while WWE depends on good-old-fashioned wrestling brawls.

Once maligned as nothing but a company that promoted brawls in a cage, UFC has clawed up to match its wrestling competition in popularity.

UFC hopes to grab a slice of the international arena now dominated by WWF and HBO when it holds first pay-per-view fight in Manchester, England, two weeks before the De La Hoya-Mayweather fight.

Peña to avoid risky moves in four F3 support races

MELBOURNE—DADO PEÑA, THE LONE FILipino in the Melbourne Formula I Grand Prix, will avoid risky maneuvers in the four Formula Three support races until he gets a complete feel of the Albert Park Grand Prix Circuit here this week.

"No big risks for the first three and maybe take a few in the last race," he said Tuesday after going through a fitness test, a requirement for all the 31 drivers in the field. "The main goal is to get the maximum out of each race."

PEÑA

However, the audacious 19-year-old driver, who has pulled off big wins in the Asian Formula Three races, including a daring victory from the back of the grid at the Batangas Racing Circuit last November, said he will "push hard and pounce if an opportunity presents itself."

"There are 30 other drivers out there who want to win. We cannot be too conservative," he said.

The first of four races will be held on Thursday immediately after the battle for pole position, with the last three races set the next three days.

Peña is one of 13 foreign drivers in the field hoping to upstage local Formula Three drivers, all with an eye toward landing a driving stint with the various Formula One teams here. The rest of the foreign field represent Italy, Austria, Britain, New Zealand, China, Finland, Indonesia and Sweden.

There is tremendous pressure among the competing drivers to impress Formula One officials, a fact acknowledged by Peña, who arrived here Tuesday. But making a good impression with F1 officials is not his priority now.

"For me, there is no pressure. I try to look at the races as just normal races. If my results are good, the bonus is that F1 team officials are there to see it," said Peña.

CF-Angeles hosts poker qualifying

CASINO FILIPINO ANGELES IS HOSTING THE FIRST out-of-town qualifying/satellite tournament for the 3rd Philippine Poker Tour (PPT) Million-Peso Hold'em Philippine Championship on Sunday. Registration starts at noon.

Winners of the satellite tournaments earn guaranteed seats to the grand finals to be held on July 7-8. Players can also avail themselves of seats in the finals for P30,000 as tournament fee and P3,000 as registration fee.

The third edition of the biggest non-wager poker skills tournament is a joint project of PPT and the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor).

Other qualifying/satellite venues and schedules for the month of March are: San Mig Alabang Town Center, every Wednesdays and Fridays, Valle Verde Country Club starting 21st March 2007 and every Wednesdays and Fridays thereafter, Casino Filipino Tagaytay on 24th March and Airport Casino on 31st March.

"The objective is to produce a Filipino world champion in poker," added Gamboa.

The grand champion is guaranteed to receive a minimum of P1 million and the coveted champion's bracelet.

For inquires, call 817-9092 or 812-0153.

NY Knicks extend Thomas contract

GREENBURGH, NEW YORK—ISIAH THOMAS received a multiyear contract extension Monday as coach and team president of the New York Knicks, nine months after he was warned the National Basketball Association club needed to show "evident progress" or he'd be out of a job.

With the Knicks in the hunt for a playoff berth, Madison Square Garden chair James Dolan changed his vow to wait until after the season to make his decision, saying that Thomas would return as coach and president.

Thomas added the coaching duties to his other role in June after Dolan fired Larry Brown following one season. But along with the job came the ultimatum, though Dolan never publicly specified how the progress would be measured.

But with New York (29-34) already six wins better than last season and currently eighth in the Eastern Conference, Dolan said the improvement under Thomas "needs to be recognized now and not wait."

"I believe we have clearly seen significant and evident progress," Dolan said.

Dolan has since been impressed by a turnaround that has the Knicks on pace to make the playoffs after a two-year absence. They entered Monday with a half-game lead over Orlando for the final spot in the East.

More than the record, Dolan praised Thomas for getting the team to play together and for the improvement in the Knicks' young players. Second-year forward David Lee has become one of the NBA's best sixth men, and Eddy Curry has turned into one of the top centers in the East.

"I think every player has done well under Isiah," Dolan said. "I think we have a great future." *AP*

Warriors end Mavs' run

'17 is enough,' says current Golden State and ex-Dallas coach Nelson

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA—GOLDEN STATE SNAPPED THE DALlas Mavericks' club-record 17-game win streak here Monday, with Frenchman Mickael Pietrus scoring 20 points in a 117-100 National Basketball Association victory.

The Mavericks, who still have the NBA's best record at 52-10 and have clinched a playoff spot, had not lost since January 25 at Chicago but settled for a streak that only matched the season's best and seventh-best in history.

"We weren't here. We just didn't have it. We got outplayed and worked and hustled," Mavericks coach Avery Johnson said. "We will bounce back. This leaves a bad taste in our mouth. We don't like to play like this."

The loss ensured the Mavericks will not topple the all-time NBA one-season mark of 72-10 set by the 1995-96 Chicago Bulls nor threaten the one-season NBA win streak record of 33 set by the Los Angeles Lakers in the 1971-72 campaign.

"It was a great win. We're coming together," Warriors star Baron Davis said. "We knew how important this one was. We were able to come out and play at a very high level and I'm proud of all my teammates. We had a great team game."

Golden State, coached by former Dallas coach Don Nelson, beat Dallas for the fourth time in a row and improved to 30-36, still a game behind the Los Angeles Clippers for the final Western Conference playoff berth.

"I guess it was just time—17 was enough," Nelson said. "We had a good game plan and executed well the first three quarters.

The Warriors defeated Dallas, 107-104, on November 6, part of the Mavericks' season-opening four-game losing streak, but made a major eight-player trade with Indiana on January 17 that changed their lineup considerably.

That swap brought forwards Al Harrington and Josh Powell, swingman Stephen Jackson and guard Sarunas Jasikevicius from Indiana for forwards Mike Dunleavy, Troy Murphy and Ike Diogu and guard Keith McLeod.

Jackson, Harrington, Latvia's Andris Biedrins and Jason Richardson each added 16 points for the Warriors, who have gone 11-15 since the trade, winning four of their past five starts.

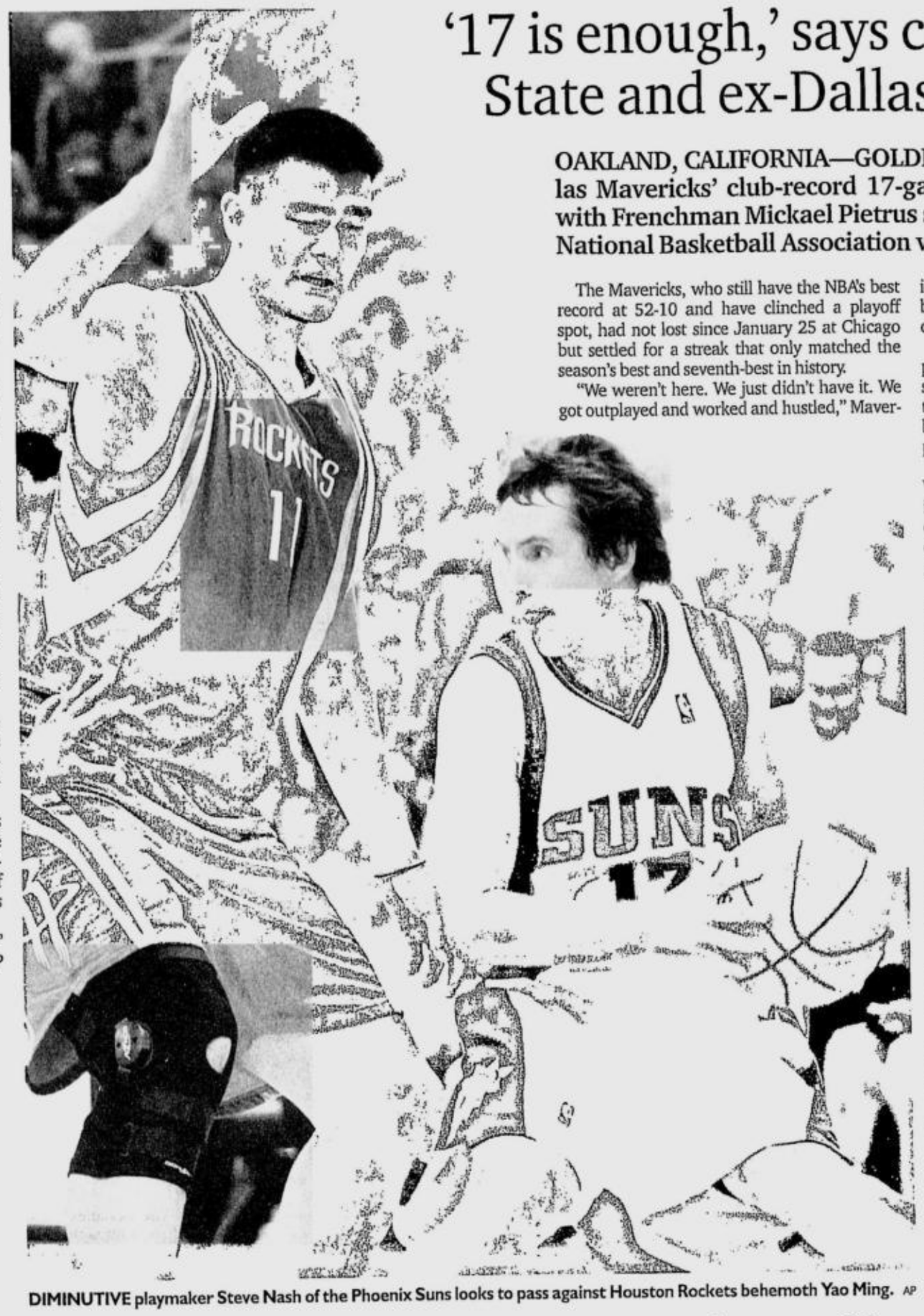
The Mavericks got only 13 points from German star Dirk Nowitzki, who made only 3-of-11 shots from the field and committed seven turnovers.

"They came out swinging and we were never ready for the attack," Nowitzki said.

In other games, it was Charlotte 119, Orlando 108; Toronto 108, Milwaukee 93; New Jersey 113, Memphis 102.

In Phoenix, Arizona, Leandro Barbosa matched a career high with 32 points, sparking the Suns past the Houston Rockets, 103-82.

"I am just having fun and I am trying to make plays," Barbosa said. *AFP*



DIMINUTIVE playmaker Steve Nash of the Phoenix Suns looks to pass against Houston Rockets behemoth Yao Ming. AP

Tapia 'not breathing,' drug OD suspected

ALBUQUERQUE—FIVE-TIME WORLD BOXing champion Johnny Tapia was hospitalized in critical condition on Monday after an apparent cocaine overdose, the latest episode outside the ring in the Albuquerque fighter's turbulent life.

Police spokesperson Trish Hoffman said the 40-year-old Tapia was taken to Presbyterian Hospital after paramedics responded to an early morning call about a person who wasn't breathing at a hotel room.

"It appears to be an overdose," Hoffman said. "He will be charged with possession of a controlled substance."

Police discovered a plastic bag containing a white substance, which Hoffman said was confirmed by tests as cocaine.

Tapia's latest problem with drugs comes just over two weeks after he won a majority decision over Evaristo Primero. He has a 56-5-2 record.

In pre-fight remarks, Tapia said his hard-living days were behind him. But in the same interview, Tapia's old personality resurfaced.

"Every day, I'm doing good. But if I want to go drink right now, I can," he said. "Nobody tells me what I can do or what I want to do. I'm trying to do for my family and myself, but if I want to go party, I'll party."

Tapia was banned from boxing for 3½ years in the early 1990s because of his cocaine addiction. He spent six months in rehabilitation in 2003 after a collapse at home and later that year police said he overdosed on prescription pills. *AP*

Sorenstam loses via playoff

HUIXQUILUCAN, MEXICO—Meaghan Francella sunk a 4-foot putt for birdie and beat Annika Sorenstam on the fourth hole of a playoff Monday to win the rain-plagued MasterCard Classic for her first victory on the US LPGA Tour.

The 24-year-old American was making only her sixth start on the American women's tour after earning her tour card last year with a fifth-place finish on the Futures Tour money list.

"I can't describe it. It's something I've worked for my entire life," Francella said. "Annika is the best player in the world and I was little intimidated.

"I was on the third tee with her and I thought, 'Man am I really doing this?' I thought I was dreaming. It was pretty exciting."

Francella, the second-round leader, closed with a 3-under 69 to match Sorenstam (66) at 11-under 205 on the Bosque Real Country Club course, the longest on the tour at 6,932 yards and also the highest at about 3,600 meters above sea level.

Francella made the 4-foot putt for the victory after Sorenstam, the two-time defending champion making her first start of the year, missed a 7-foot birdie try.

"I wasn't expecting Annika to miss that putt," Francella said. "I just stayed in my moment and made that putt. I had nothing to lose out there today." *AP*

China: No four pests in Olympics

BEIJING—WITH A NOD TO HISTORY, Chinese politicians have drawn up a list of "four pests" to be eradicated before the 2008 Olympic Games—smoking, spitting, queue-jumping and cursing.

Communist China's founder Mao Zedong was the author of the original "four pests" list in the 1950s, but a new version has been proposed at the current session of the national parliament here.

Backed by the organizing committee of next year's Olympics, leaders of the city government and the ruling Communist Party, it takes aim at "uncivilized behavior" that damages Beijing's image, according to Zi Huayun, a member of the parliamentary advisory body.

"Although those new 'four pests' seem to be tiny things, they are stubborn diseases that stain the image of the capital city," Zi told reporters.

The original four pests were rats, flies, mosquitoes and sparrows. Their extermination had unforeseen consequences, however. In the absence of sparrows, locusts swarmed over the countryside.

Smoking may be harder to stamp out. China has one of the highest smoking rates in the world, and hotels and restaurants show high tolerance to tobacco use. *AFP*

'Grandma' Inge retires

THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS—FOUR-time Olympic swimming champion Inge de Bruijn of the Netherlands retired on Monday.

"My career is over," De Bruijn told Dutch news agency ANP.

"It can't get any better. I'm at the ceiling and see no more challenges. I'm 33 years old—in swimming that's a grandmother."

She hadn't competed in any major events since the 2004 Athens Olympics, and completed her career with eight Olympic medals overall, and five world championships.

She earned three golds at the 2000 Sydney Games in the 50-meter freestyle, 100 free and 100 butterfly, and a silver in the women's 4x100 free relay.

In Athens, De Bruijn defended her 50 free title, won silver in the 100 free, and bronze in the 100 butterfly, and another bronze in the 4x100 free relay.

"I kept postponing it because it is the most difficult decision I've ever had to make," she said. *AP*

RAFAEL Nadal gracefully follows through a backhand return to Fernando Verdasco. AP

PACIFIC LIFE TILT

Roddick, Nadal continue march

INDIAN WELLS, CALIFORNIA—Andy Roddick served 18 aces, one clocked at 147 mph (237 kph), on his way to a 6-3, 7-6 (5) victory over Olivier Rochus in the third round of the Pacific Life Open on Monday.

Roddick overcame 33 unforced errors with his strong serve and well-placed forehands. Rochus made 12 fewer unforced errors than his American opponent, but did not have a single ace.

No. 3-ranked Roddick finished the match on a sweltering afternoon in the desert with a crosscourt forehand winner that the Belgian couldn't reach. Roddick thrust his fist into the air briefly in triumph, then used his shirt to wipe the sweat soaking his face.

Julien Benneteau of France bounced another highly ranked American, No. 6 James Blake, out of the tournament with a 6-2, 7-6 (1) victory. Blake, last year's runner-up, had trouble keeping the ball in play, committing 41 unforced errors to Benneteau's 18.

Guillermo Canas, who a day earlier upset Roger Federer to end the Swiss star's winning streak at 41 matches, was ousted by former No. 1 Carlos Moya, 6-4, 6-4.

Moya, the 1999 runner-up here and still a threat at 30 with runs to the finals in Sydney and Acapulco this year, had a handle on his Argentine opponent, who lost in qualifying but made the main draw when Xavier Malisse withdrew.

No. 2 Rafael Nadal beat Fernando Verdasco, 6-4, 6-4, in their night match, running his record to 5-0 against his fellow Spaniard.

Roddick said having Federer, who has won the tournament the past three years, eliminated is both a plus and a minus.

"I want to beat Roger. Obviously, it helps out everybody, it takes the toughest player out of the draw," Roddick said. "But at the same time, I'm going to have to figure it out one of these times anyway.

"You can't sit back and hope that he loses because that's not going to happen a lot."

David Nalbandian reached the fourth round in this tournament for the third year in a row when he beat Paul-Henri Mathieu of France, 6-7 (3), 6-2, 6-0.

On the women's side, second-seeded Svetlana Kuznetsova defeated another Russian, Elena Likhovtseva, 6-1, 7-6 (4). *AP*

SPORTS

UST is UAAP overall champ again

By Jasmine W. Payo

ATHLETIC BRILLIANCE CONTINUED TO FLOURISH AT THE UNIversity of Santo Tomas as the Tigers captured the 69th UAAP overall championship for the ninth straight year.

The España-based contingent prevailed over six other universities with a runaway 331 points after topping 11 of 26 sports events.

Punctuating the Tigers' conquest were title sweeps in men and women's basketball, lawn tennis and taekwondo.

They also copped the championship in men's football, baseball and judo, and in women's volleyball, chess, swimming and table tennis.

UST, along with other top season performers in team and individual sports, will be honored during the UAAP Annual Awards on March 25 at the University of the East Theater in Manila.

State U second

University of the Philippines claimed the runner-up citation with a distant 254 points after clinching the title in men's swimming and women's judo.

The Maroons also earned second-place finishes in men's volleyball, chess, judo and lawn tennis and women's fencing, lawn tennis, swimming, softball and taekwondo.

UST, the host for Season 70, secured runner-up honors in men's and women's athletics, men's fencing, swimming and table tennis and women's badminton, football and judo.

The Tigers also earned third place in women's softball and men's volleyball.

Far Eastern University's tournament sweep in athletics and badminton propelled them to third overall with 218 points, despite competing in only 18 events.

The Tamaraws also bagged the crown in men's chess, table tennis and volleyball and women's football.

Ateneo ruled women's fencing to claim fourth spot with 209 points.

Host UE clinched the championship in men's fencing to finish with a fifth-best 177 points.

Adamson University again dominated women's softball to land in sixth place with 95 points, while National University settled for seventh with 48 points.

The UAAP overall winner was determined through a point system that rewards a school with 15 points for every championship, 12 points for second honors and 10 points for a third-place finish.

Tipon, Payla, 24 others still awaiting AFP release papers

By Marc Anthony Reyes

FOUR OF THE COUNTRY'S BRIGHTEST hopes for an Olympic medal are in limbo because military authorities are continuing to sit on their release papers, depriving them precious time to train with the national team.

Asian Games boxing gold medalists Joan Tipon and Violito Payla, as well as taekwondo jins Thsomlee Go and Alexander Briones could not be released because they have not completed basic military training.

The four are part of the 26 soldier-athletes for whose temporary release the country's sports authorities are still appealing so they could put their training on high gear.

Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez said he does not want to preempt the Armed Forces of the Philippines but is hopeful that the soldier-athletes will be given furloughs soon.

Tipon and Payla are shoo-in for the boxing team seeking the country's first Olympic gold medal in next year's Beijing Games.

Ramirez said he has already requested the release of the soldier-athletes, but has not received formal communication from the AFP.

"I don't want to preempt the AFP, but I'm confident they will issue the release papers of the remaining athletes," Ramirez told the INQUIRER. "I think it's just a technical matter."

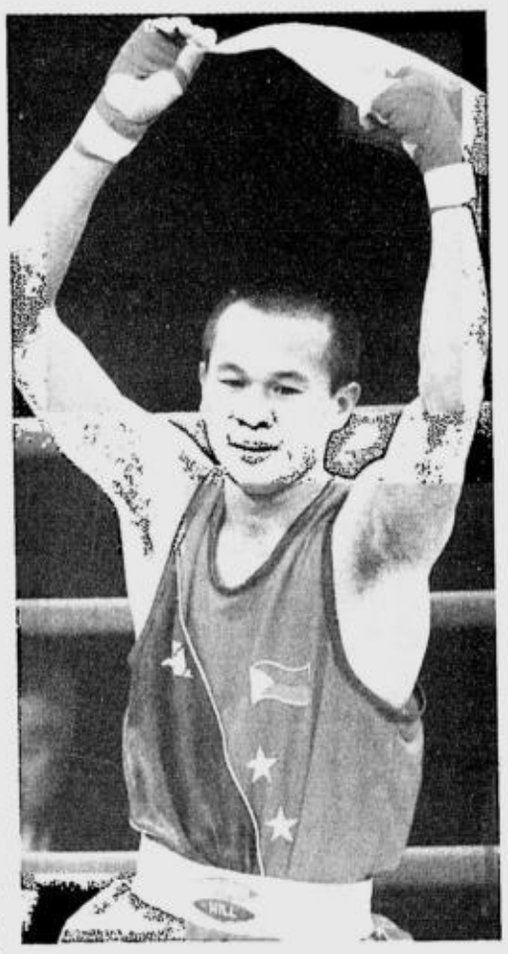
Although Ramirez declined to confirm it, Payla, Tipon, Go and Briones were reportedly the biggest names who failed to secure releases—a development that could jeopardize the Philippines' buildup for this December's Southeast Asian Games in Thailand and for the Olympics.

Taekwondo head coach Stephen Fernandez also would not admit any trouble with the training schedules of Go and Briones who both managed to take part in the recent Fajr International Invitational meet in Iran.

Go, the Asian Games silver medalist and Athens Olympian, and SEAG champion Briones are enlisted men in the Air Force.

Boxing president Manny Lopez did not return calls, but the association said that the boxers, including Payla and Tipon, are training in Baguio City.

About 400 national athletes report to different units in the Armed Forces, which recently released more than half of them for the Olympic build-up.



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Gov't cautioned against revising BOT law

Proliferation of unsolicited proposals seen harmful

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE UNITED STATES HAS URGED THE PHILIPPINES to scrap plans to amend the implementing rules and regulations of the Build-Operate-Transfer law, warning that such a move could harm public sector interests.

In a position paper submitted during the Philippine Development Forum with global official development partners in Cebu last week, the US delegation lauded efforts to advance the agenda on competitiveness.

But while there were significant steps forward, the US delegation said there were also "setbacks."

"The proposed amendments to the IRRs of the BOT Law, while well-intentioned, may actually create a riskier environment for private sector participation," the US delegation said.

"We are concerned that the amendments may result in a proliferation of unsolicited proposals and contracts that are disadvantageous to the public interest," the position paper said.

The Department of Trade and Industry and the National Economic and Development Authority are currently working on amendments to the BOT Law to make it more appealing to investors.

Malacañang has already issued an executive order streamlining rules and procedures on the review and approval of all government contracts, which increased the accountability of agencies by authorizing them to execute and sign contracts amounting to P300 million. Prior to the EO, contracts exceeding P50 million had to be approved by the Neda and the Office of the President.

The US delegation also urged the government to speed up progress on the power sector priva-

GOV'T/ B2

THE RISK for covering catastrophic expenses (referring to the huge medical bills arising from serious illnesses) should be shared between insurance and service providers.

Healthcare protection in RP 'poor', 'insufficient'

By Doris C. Dumlao

(First of two parts)

HEALTHCARE PROTECTION IN THE PHILIPPINES is "poor" and "insufficient," with only one of every three citizens covered by medical insurance and as much as 44 percent of all health spending drawn out of people's own pockets.

This were the findings of a recent report by the Department of Health-chaired Philippine Development Forum (PDF) Millennium Development Goal and Social Progress sub-working group on health presented during a meeting with global donors in Cebu last week.

Over the last 10 years, the task force said the national social health insurance program had been well established through PhilHealth.

"While PhilHealth membership is mandatory, approximately 30 percent of the Philippine population are without health insurance coverage, which means that the national health insurance program is 30 percent short of the goal of universal social health insurance coverage," the report said.

Even those who are members of PhilHealth

HEALTHCARE/ B5

INDICATORS

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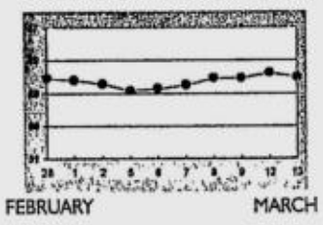

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STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

(See stock market report on Page B6)

Shares up 1.82%

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.82-PERCENT higher yesterday, extending gains to a third day on the back of a supportive Wall Street performance overnight, dealers said.

Investors picked up bargains but trading volumes remained light, suggesting many were still cautious following recent turmoil on global markets, they said.

The composite index added 57 points at 3,181.96 after trading between 3,124.96 and 3,185.68.

Gains led losers 81 to 32, with 46 stocks unchanged. Turnover was 4.4 billion shares worth P3.67 billion.

"It's a continuation of the technical bounce,"

SHARES/ B3

IN THIS ISSUE

SMIC profits up 31.7% in 2006 /B6

Merrill Lynch bullish on RP, issues buy rating /B10

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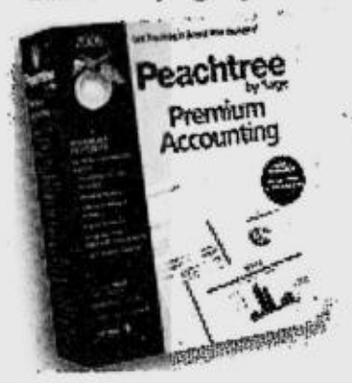

PNOC-EDC bags $13.7-M drilling contract in Papua New Guinea

By Abigail L. Ho

LISTED FIRM PNOC Energy Development Corp. has bagged a $13.7-million contract to drill 17 geothermal and dewatering wells for Lihir Gold Ltd. (LGL) in Papua New Guinea.

In a statement issued yesterday, PNOC-EDC said it has started drilling activities for LGL and would continue drilling for the next 10 months.

This is PNOC-EDC's fifth drilling contract with LGL since 1999.

Last year, PNOC-EDC completed a 12-month contract worth $5.7 million, its fourth with the Papua New Guinea company. The deal involved the drilling of 15 geothermal and dewatering wells.

The state-run firm bested Papua New Guinea's Zenex Drilling and Australia's Century Drilling for that contract.

LGL, formerly known as Lihir Management Corp., sources part of its power requirements for its gold mine and processing facility from geothermal energy.

It recently commissioned a 20-megawatt (MW) geothermal expansion plant, boosting its generation capacity to 56 MW.

LGL chief executive Arthur Hood said geothermal power would supply 75 percent of the 75-MW power requirement of the gold mine and processing facility this year.

He added that LGL was looking at the possibility of further expanding its power plant by exploring more geothermal steam reserves to meet the company's future needs.

LGI's gold mine and processing facility on Lihir island, New Ireland Province of Papua New Guinea, is one of the biggest gold mines in the world.

PNOC-EDC is the country's largest provider of onshore drilling services, with its highly skilled drilling division and seven onshore drilling rigs.

It started exporting its drilling services in 1997 to Indonesia.

PNOC-EDC has since then deployed drilling rigs, drilling consultants and rig maintenance specialists to Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

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Gov't cautioned . . .

From page B1

tization and sustain the fiscal reform momentum with the rationalization of fiscal incentives for both foreign and domestic investors.

With substantial progress in economic performance, the US team said the Philippines now had the opportunity to increase investments in people and infrastructure, improve business confidence and generate a broad-based economic growth that would create jobs and reduce poverty.

"Positive signs and trends are emerging in building a new Philippines with a range of governance, competitiveness, education, health, environment and peace and security initiatives," the delegation said.

"Risks and challenges to this critical agenda remain, including inequality, weak rule of law, corruption, an unpredictable business climate amid security and terrorism threats," it said.

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Shares up 1.82%

From page B1

said Nestor Aguila of DA Market Securities.

"The market is still consolidating and building a base above the 3,000 points level before another major rally, possibly after the Easter break (in early April) or after the mid-term elections (in May)." Another rally, he said, would be driven by the positive long-term outlook for the economy, with growth likely boosted by increased government spending on infrastructure.

Aguila noted there was speculative interest particularly in cement companies, with these firms expected to benefit from the huge government spending on new roads, bridges and school buildings. *AFP*

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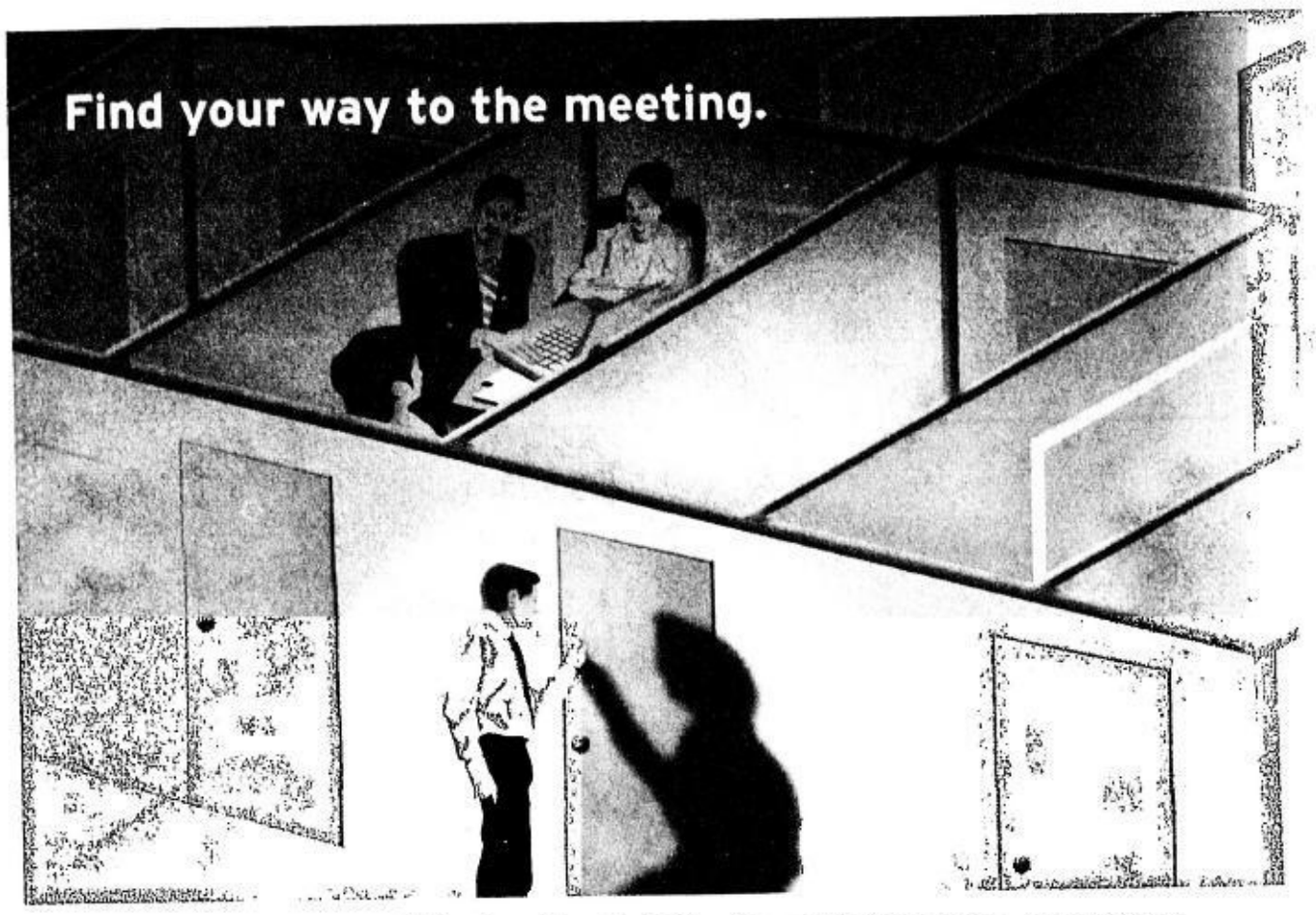

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Escolta in decay

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

THE OTHER DAY, I HAD TO GO TO MANILA to transact business with Malayan Insurance at Quintin Paredes, Binondo. As I usually do nowadays whenever I make my infrequent trips to Manila from Makati, I took a taxi. The traffic was unusually light and I arrived at Plaza Moraga half an hour before my mid-morning appointment. To kill time, I decided to take a stroll down memory lane by going through Escolta and swinging around to Dasmariñas Street.

I have fond memories of Escolta. From 1948 to 1951, I worked my way through mechanical engineering night school as a steno-typist at the office of the late Sen. Vicente Madrigal, the grandfather of Sen. Jamby Madrigal. For his Senate staff, he rented a room in the Regina Building. Across the hallway, he ran Madrigal Shipping, then the world's largest tramp steamship company.

After taking the board exams in 1951, my dean found me a job in the Insular Life-FGU Insurance Group, which was then part of the Ayala Group. The office was at the Filipinas Building, Plaza Moraga. This was supposed to be a temporary arrangement until an engineering job I was eyeing opened up. After six months as a fire insurance inspector, I was transferred to Training & Planning where I went through two years of intensive study and training. Insurance became my lifelong career.

In all, I spent 10 years working at Escolta. Often during lunch break, I thoroughly enjoyed window-shopping. I seldom bought anything. The goodies on display at the upscale stores—Soriente Santos, H. Alonzo, Walkover Shoes, Levy Hermanos, Heacock's, Berg's and Botica Boie—were out of my price range. I did my buying in the less expensive stores on Rizal Avenue.

At Dasmariñas were the large hardware stores. I still have the remnants of a screwdriver set I bought from a sidewalk vendor just outside Go Soc & Sy Gui Huat.

Lyric and Capitol were the high-class movie houses. Before World War II, my father treated me to my first trip to Manila. There were no air-conditioned movie houses in Naga. So, my father took me to my first air-conditioned movie at Capitol.

Escolta was the banking and insurance hub. The head offices of Philippine National Bank and Rehabilitation Finance Corp. (later renamed Development Bank of the Philippines) Bank of the Philippine Islands, Citibank and Prudential were in the area. Almost all of the insurance companies, domestic and foreign, had their main offices in and around Escolta. The Insurance Commission was in Natividad Building.

From Spanish times, Escolta was the most expensive strip of real estate in the land. It is on Escolta where the country's first multi-storied buildings rose.

My stroll down memory lane was a complete letdown. The glory and glitter are gone.

Escolta is in total decay. The banks and insurance companies have moved out. Capitol Theater is a shell. Where Lyric Theater used to be is now a school. The upscale stores are all gone. Berg's is shuttered down. Dasmariñas is worse. It is a dump. The whole street needs a coat of paint.

About the only good thing left is you can still get a good Chinese meal in the area.

The Escolta decay can be traced directly to the spectacular rise of Makati and the shopping malls in the suburbs. But Escolta has to be rehabilitated. It is part of our history. Perhaps, the city government can set up a commission to study how to bring back Escolta's old glory. Then, I will enjoy another stroll down memory lane.

10-year T-bond rate rises to 6.942%

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE AVERAGE yield of the 10-year treasury bonds rose to 6.942 percent yesterday from a historic low of 6.518 percent in the previous auction as banks demanded a higher premium for holding on to long-term debt papers.

But the cash-rich banks swamped the Bureau of the Treasury's auction as tenders reached P17.14 billion, or more than twice the P7-billion offering. The Treasury awarded the offering in full, allowing the yields to rise.

Bankers said the auction was influenced by recent comments from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. that the negative interest rate environment—or a situation where bond yields are lower than inflation—was not sustainable.

"I think the risk aversion in the market has made people realize that the 10-year (bond rate) has to move up a bit, that they have to be compensated in the risk premium," said Chinatrust Philippines Commercial Bank treasurer Roland Avante.

Even factoring in the impact of the peso's appreciation against the dollar, Avante said comparative 10-year foreign currency-denominated Philippine bonds or ROPs were offering better yields.

As such, he said there was some pressure for the yield of the local 10-year bonds to rise especially after Tetangco himself indicated that local rates had to move up.

"Otherwise, there will be a shift in preference to dollar bonds," Avante said.

But despite the uptick in the 10-year bond rate, Avante said the government was still in a good borrowing position.

"It's still very cheap for them. If you have the government picking up funds at 7 percent (rounded off), they're still doing okay," Avante said.

Jonathan Ravelas, chief strategist at Banco de Oro Universal Bank, said he would not yet describe yesterday's uptick as a bottoming out.

"It's a correction. The market took a breather," Ravelas said.

He said the market had reacted to Tetangco's comments on interest rates.

Tetangco said on Friday that domestic interest rates would gradually move up as the low rates would create demand for borrowings.

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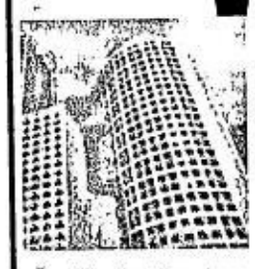
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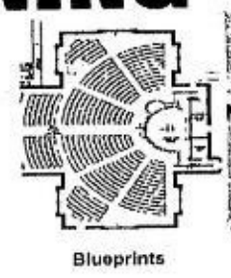
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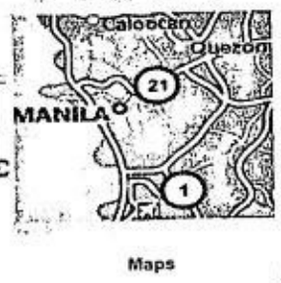

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Healthcare protection . . .

From page B1

receive only limited financial protection, leading to a high financial burden on people seeking healthcare, it noted.

"Currently, PhilHealth membership does not protect its member from sliding into or sustaining poverty due to health-related catastrophic expenses. The current design of the benefit package places the risk of catastrophic payments on the member instead of the insurance—thus missing to some extent the purpose of insurance," the report said.

Ideally, the risk for covering catastrophic expenses (referring to the huge medical bills arising from serious illnesses) should be shared between insurance and service providers, the report said.

Citing national health accounts, the report said about 44 percent of all health spending in the Philippines is out-of-pocket while citing some research studies which showed that only half of the total cost of obtaining treatment was being covered by PhilHealth. *(To be continued.)*

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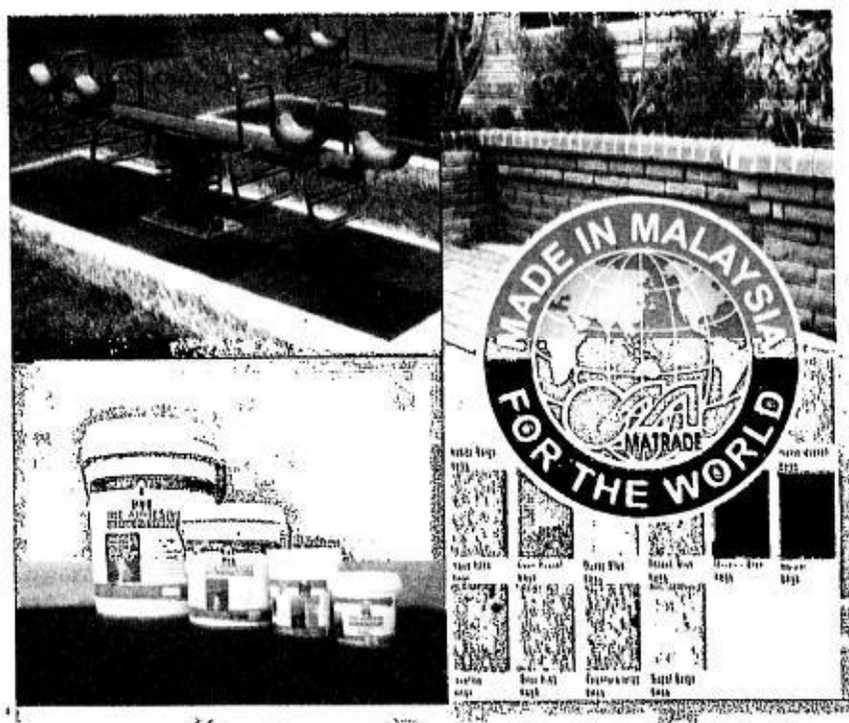

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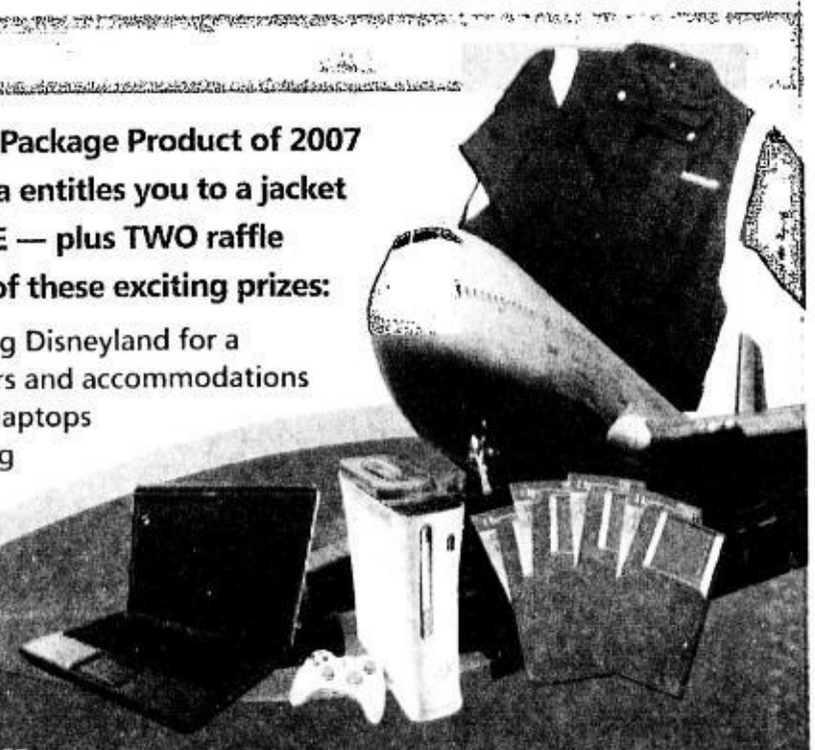

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SMIC profits up 31.7% in 2006

Strong performance boosts its bottom line

By Daxim L. Lucas

SM INVESTMENTS CORP. (SMIC), the holding firm of mall tycoon Henry Sy Sr., reported full-year 2006 profits of P10.6 billion, up by 31.7 percent due to improved performance of its core business units.

Excluding extraordinary items, SMIC's net recurring income grew strongly by 20 percent to P7.1 billion, the company said in a statement.

More importantly, earnings excluding interest and tax payments, depreciation and amortization, increased by 33 percent to P19.6 billion.

"SM achieved its targets for 2006 in what I would consider one of our best years to date," SMIC president Harley Sy said in the statement. "Apart from achieving our financial targets, it's the year we grew the fastest in terms of floor area for our malls and our retail stores, having opened five malls, four department stores, three supermarkets, and four hypermarkets."

Included in this expansion is the country's largest mall, the SM Mall of Asia. SM North Edsa was also transformed into the country's second largest mall, with the opening of The Block.

"In addition, we were able to obtain the mandate to merge Banco de Oro Universal (BDO) and Equitable PCI-Bank," Sy added.

According to the firm, consolidated revenues expanded by 64.4 percent to P89 billion due to improved performance of all its core businesses, and the added boost from the acquisition of the 28 SM Supermarkets and nine SM Hypermarkets into SM's retail sector as of June 2006.

As a result, merchandise sales, which includes the full-year sales of SM department stores, shot up by 74.7 percent to P68 billion.

Rental income, derived mostly from mall operations, grew 17.8 percent to P9.8 billion as cinema ticket sales increased by 19.9 percent to P2.3 billion.

Operating expenses, on the other hand, grew by 62.8 percent to P17.6 billion. Combined with cost of sales of P54.9 billion, total costs and expenses increased by 74.6 percent to P72.5 billion.

As a result, operating income grew 30.4 percent to P16.2 billion, translating to an operating margin of 18.3 percent for the year.

According to Sy, SMIC also forged ahead with its residential developments through subsidiary SM Development Corp., and its commercial development in SM Bay City.

Of the four core businesses of SM, retail merchandising accounted for 82 percent of gross revenues from just 74 percent in 2005, as the acquisition of the SM Supermarkets and SM Hypermarkets chains broadened the company's retail base.

The rest was accounted for by mall operations, real estate and other items.

BUSINESS BRIEF

Manulife sales surge

Local sales of Manulife Financial Corp.'s products continued to be on the upsurge in the fourth quarter of 2006 as combined life & pre-need sales rose by 41 percent compared with the same quarter in 2005.

According to the company, sales of pre-need products grew by 51 percent compared with the same quarter in 2005, while sales of life products climbed by 33 percent against the same period last year.

"Premiums and deposits were up by 22 percent against the last quarter of 2005," Manulife Philippines president and CEO Carl Gustini said. "This is evident in the rise in the company's 13th month conservation rate in 2006 where it ended close to a three-year high."

Yesterday, Manulife reported shareholders' net income of $3.985 billion for 2006, an increase of 21 percent over the full year 2005. Earnings per share were $2.53, an increase of 23 percent compared to the $2.05 reported a year ago. Return on common shareholders equity was 16.8 percent for 2006, up from 14.1 percent in 2005. ***Daxim L. Lucas***

Bank sets stage for SMEs

BRITISH banking giant HSBC is set to expand its cash management business in the Philippines and start offering a platform for small and medium enterprises in the second quarter.

Russel Graham, head of client management at HSBC's global payments and Asia-Pacific cash management based in Hong Kong, yesterday said that with the rise of Asian multinational corporations like San Miguel Corp., companies are relying more on cash management services by multinational banks to boost operational efficiency.

Graham, who is in town to launch HSBC's 2007 guidebook on cash and treasury management in Asia Pacific, said the bank was continuing its work to "de-mistify" global cash management and would offer its services not only to top-tier and mid-sized corporations but to SMEs as well.

Manny Narciso, senior vice president at HSBC Philippines, said the bank would launch the cash management platform to local companies with less than P500 million in capitalization as part of its thrust to service a broader part of the real economy.

Across the Asia-Pacific, HSBC services about 440,000 corporate clients, of which about 2,000 are based in the Philippines. ***Doris C. Dumlao***

Napocor to apply for cost recoveries by end-March

By Abigail L. Ho

THE STATE-RUN NATIONAL POWER Corp. will file with the Energy Regulatory Commission applications to recover deferred generation, fuel and foreign exchange costs spanning five months.

In a statement issued yesterday, Napocor said it would be filing by March 30 its eighth generation rate adjustment mechanism (Gram) and seventh incremental currency exchange rate adjustment (Icera) applications.

The filings would cover the period from February to June 2006, Napocor said.

The quarterly Gram allows Napocor to recover cost fluctuations related to power it purchased from independent power producers as well as fuel costs.

The Icera, on the other hand, is a quarterly rate adjustment mechanism that allows Napocor to reflect foreign exchange fluctuations in the rates it charges its customers.

The state firm will not profit from the rate adjustments.

"These costs are actual historical costs," Napocor explained. "We are recovering them through the Gram and Icera incrementally and, as such, may either be an increase or a decrease in these adjustments. In the case of the last Gram and Icera approved by the ERC, which covered the period November 2005 to January 2006, the adjustment was a decrease."

The ERC's approval of Napocor's seventh Gram and sixth Icera resulted in combined reductions of 4.3 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh) in Luzon, 31.51 centavos per kWh in the Visayas, and 0.45 centavos per kWh in Mindanao.

These adjustments were implemented for the March billing period, spanning consumption from Feb. 26 to Mar. 25.

In a related development, the state firm denied allegations that it was deliberately delaying the filing of its Gram and Icera.

"We have religiously complied with the ERC's directives on the procedures and processes of filing for rate adjustments, as well as on other requirements," Napocor said. "Like any power generator, transmission company, distributor or cooperative, any concern regarding power rates has to go through the ERC for decision."

High prices prop up Philex income

PUBLICLY LISTED Philex Mining Corp. reported a sharp improvement in its earnings for 2006 due mainly to the high prices of precious metals on the world market.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, the mining firm said that its net profit for last year hit P3.086 billion, up from the 2005 level of P409.1 million.

The year-on-year performance represents a 654-percent increase on the company's bottom line.

On top of the high prices of gold, silver and copper on the world market, Philex was also helped by increased output at its mines.

In its statement to the PSE, Philex said that its board of directors also approved a cash dividend of P0.10 per share, the record and payment dates of which have yet to be announced.

In a separate disclosure, the company said its board had also approved the extension of its Padcal mining operations until 2014, representing three years worth of additional operations from its previously disclosed mine life of 2011.

Located in Benguet, Philex said it would stretch the mine life of Padcal mines to take advantage of steadily rising metal prices.

Despite the news, trading of Philex's shares on the PSE remained lackluster, with the company's stock managing only a P0.10 gain to P4.25 from P4.15 during the previous session.

Trading was light with P37.4 million worth of shares changing hands, despite the company having a P12.2-billion market capitalization—the biggest among listed mining firms.

Recently, Philex reported that it had exported P840 million worth of previous metals in February, topping its P819-million haul from January.

The firm said the earnings came from the sale of its gold, silver and copper production to foreign buyers. ***Daxim L. Lucas***

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Lobby Level, Punta Engaño Road, Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu
Tel: (032) 231-5077 Fax: (032) 231-5056

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 13, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	11	11	10.75	10.75	30,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	58	59	58	58	3,066,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	67.5	68.5	67.5	67.5	1,606,200
China Banking Corp.	860	880	860	880	1,620
Citystate Savings Bank	20	20	20	20	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	4,460,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	100	106	100	105	71,600
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	61	62	61	62	967,200
Philippine National Bank	48	48	48	48	3,300
Phil. Savings Bank	64.5	64.5	64.5	64.5	100
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	35.5	36.5	35.5	35.5	289,100
Security Bank Corp.	78	78.5	78	78	419,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	58	59	58	59	1,800
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	50,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	6.5	6.7	6.5	6.6	396,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5	20,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1600	1635	1600	1635	1,710
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	337,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	700	700	695	700	1,870
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2110	2130	2110	2130	1,420
Ivantage Corp.	1.56	1.58	1.56	1.58	1,029,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	6	6	5.9	5.9	6,953,000
First Gen Corp.	52.5	54	52.5	53.5	2,205,700
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	73	73.5	72	72	779,600
Manila Electric Co. A	73.5	74	73.5	74	319,300
Manila Electric Co. B	74.5	74.5	73.5	74	1,874,700
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.1	9.1	9	9	6,756,000
Petron Corp.	4.4	4.6	4.4	4.55	13,618,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	200,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.34	1.38	1.34	1.34	329,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.7	112,000
CADP Group Corp.	1.84	1.9	1.84	1.9	3,000
Cen Azucar De Tarlac	3	4.95	3	4.95	22,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25.5	26.5	25.5	25.5	445,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	51	52.5	51	52.5	248,900
RFM Corp.	1.34	1.36	1.34	1.36	100,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	20,000
San Miguel Corp. A	62.5	62.5	61.5	62	101,300
San Miguel Corp. B	71.5	71.5	70	70	229,100
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.18	2.3	2.18	2.28	8,461,000
Universal Robina Corp.	18	18	17.75	18	105,700
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.68	1.8	1.68	1.78	45,093,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.55	4.55	4.4	4.55	1,491,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	3.5	3.8	3.5	3.7	43,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.3	8.7	8.3	8.7	7,379,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	6	6	6	6	13,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.8	6.3	5.8	6.2	115,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.9	4.95	4.9	4.9	312,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	20,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.76	0.76	0.75	0.75	200,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Active Alliance Inc.	3	3	3	3	10,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.35	0.36	0.34	0.35	8,920,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.011	14,500,000
Ayala Corp.	575	580	565	575	429,770
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.71	0.74	0.71	0.74	80,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8	8.2	8	8.2	8,678,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.3	6.4	6	6	2,188,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.0675	0.07	0.0675	0.0675	33,900,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.25	3.4	3.25	3.3	332,000
APC Group Inc.	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.33	7,460,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	32,200,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.48	1.5	1.48	1.5	5,619,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	55,000
Pal Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.65	3.6	3.65	10,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	5.1	5.1	5	5	71,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.55	3.65	3.45	3.5	58,756,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.2	7.4	7.1	7.1	1,757,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5.1	5.1	5	5	1,680,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	50,000
House Of Investments Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.46	2.46	135,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.75	13	12.5	13	467,700
Magnum Holdings Inc.	7.3	8.1	7.3	8	1,740,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.54	1.82	1.54	1.68	323,000
Pacifica	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	20,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	600,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.5	128,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.7	0.7	310,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.195	0.21	0.195	0.205	23,850,000
SM Investments Corp.	350	375	350	375	444,350
South China Resources Inc.	1.14	1.14	1.06	1.06	221,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	4,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	850,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	16.5	16.5	16.25	16.5	8,394,700
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	100,000
Belle Corp.	1.36	1.38	1.36	1.36	8,184,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.24	1.28	1.22	1.24	1,354,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.49	0.5	4,060,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	19,000
C & P Homes Inc.	2.8	2.85	2.75	2.75	576,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.8	0.82	0.79	0.8	30,470,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.88	1.88	1.88	1.88	100,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0675	0.0675	0.065	0.0675	3,600,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.6	1.68	1.56	1.68	177,425,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	20,000
Interport Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	12,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	3,500,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.46	0.51	0.46	0.49	4,310,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.83	0.87	0.83	0.86	5,040,000
Megaworld Corp.	3.1	3.2	3.05	3.1	82,095,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	44,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.67	0.79	0.67	0.73	15,590,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	19.75	19.75	19.5	19.5	2,329,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.61	0.63	0.6	0.63	7,480,000
SM Development Corp.	4	4	4	4	1,367,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.5	11.75	11.25	11.75	7,529,900
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.72	0.75	0.68	0.69	2,600,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.145	0.145	0.14	0.14	3,500,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23.5	24.5	23	24.5	369,800
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.72	1.74	1.72	1.72	9,645,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1370	1375	1365	1375	50,990
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.8	1,284,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2360	2410	2360	2400	121,630
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	1,580,000
Diversified Fin. Network	4	4	4	4	9,000
Imperial Res.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	400,000
Ionics Inc.	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	816,000
IPVG Corp.	5.7	5.9	5.7	5.8	1,329,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0575	0.0575	0.055	0.055	2,800,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0625	0.065	0.0625	0.0625	1,400,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.76	1.78	1.74	1.74	392,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.06	2.14	2.04	2.14	402,000
Philweb Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.048	0.048	197,100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.25	4.3	4.25	4.25	133,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	30.5	31	30.5	30.5	957,300
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1.06	1.18	1.06	1.18	342,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Grand Plaza Hotel Corp.	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	272,200
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.35	1,257,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.35	0.37	0.35	0.37	170,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.94	0.95	0.92	0.92	610,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8	8	8	8	29,000
iPeople Inc.	3.25	3.3	3.25	3.3	722,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.7	2.75	2.7	2.7	527,000
Paxys Inc.	26.5	28	26.5	27	2,816,300
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.64	1.7	1.64	1.7	107,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.3	5.4	5.2	5.4	190,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.5	28,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	165,700,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9	9.6	9	9.5	3,089,000
Benguet Corp. A	11.5	11.5	11.25	11.25	5,500
Benguet Corp. B	35	35	35	35	500
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	1,000
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.34	1.4	1.32	1.36	45,932,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	2,040,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	10,070,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	181,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.033	0.033	0.032	0.032	71,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.02	0.021	0.019	0.02	2,590,500,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.25	4.3	4.25	4.25	8,797,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	19.25	19.5	19.25	19.5	4,042,200
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.71	0.73	0.7	0.71	4,540,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.2	1.24	1.18	1.24	11,009,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.36	11,190,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	198,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	20,500,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	150,700,000
Pnoc Exploration Corp.-B	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	20,000

CURRENCIES

March 13, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.757978	1.000000	48.4120
Japan	Yen	0.006441	0.008498	0.4114
United Kingdom	Pound	1.464868	1.932600	93.5610
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.096999	0.127971	6.1953
Switzerland	Franc	0.619010	0.816660	39.5361
Canada	Dollar	0.647346	0.854044	41.3460
Singapore	Dollar	0.496578	0.655136	31.7164
Australia	Dollar	0.593794	0.783392	37.9256
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.010658	2.652661	128.4206
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.202208	0.266773	12.9150
Brunei	Dollar	0.494957	0.652997	31.6129
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000083	0.000109	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.023109	0.030488	1.4760
UAE	Dirham	0.206438	0.272353	13.1852
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.319300	63.8700
Korea	Won	0.000803	0.001060	0.0513
China	Yuan**	0.097778	0.128999	6.2451
Argentina	Peso	0.244312	0.322321	15.6042
Brazil	Real	0.361976	0.477555	23.1194
Denmark	Kroner	0.134217	0.177073	8.5725
India	Rupee	0.017184	0.022671	1.0975
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.216565	0.285714	13.8320
Mexico	New Peso	0.068081	0.089819	4.3483
New Zealand	Dollar	0.525279	0.693001	33.5496
South Africa	Rand	0.103105	0.136027	6.5853
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022953	0.030282	1.4660

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—March 12, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of March 12, 2007

LRTA ridership up

By Riza T. Olchondra

MORE FILIPINOS ARE TAKING THE LIGHT Rail Transit these days because of the additional trains made available to the public.

Light Rail Transit Authority Administrator Mel Robles said that on the feast of the Black Nazarene last Jan. 9, around 432,591 passengers took the Line 1, which runs from Monumento to Baclaran, compared to 428,845 passengers on the same day last year.

Robles also cited February figures to illustrate growing ridership.

Last month, the number of LRTA passengers reached 9.42 million passengers, up 6 percent from 8.88 million on the same month last year.

LRTA said that what made the difference this year was the availability of 83 trains for the morning peak hours and 86 trains for the afternoon peak hours compared with just 70 trains running last year.

Morning peak runs from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. while afternoon peak covers 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Despite having revealed increased ridership for select months, however, LRTA has yet to report its ridership for 2006.

During the first nine months of 2006, the light rail authority recorded a net loss of P896 million, up from just P606 million during the same period previous year.

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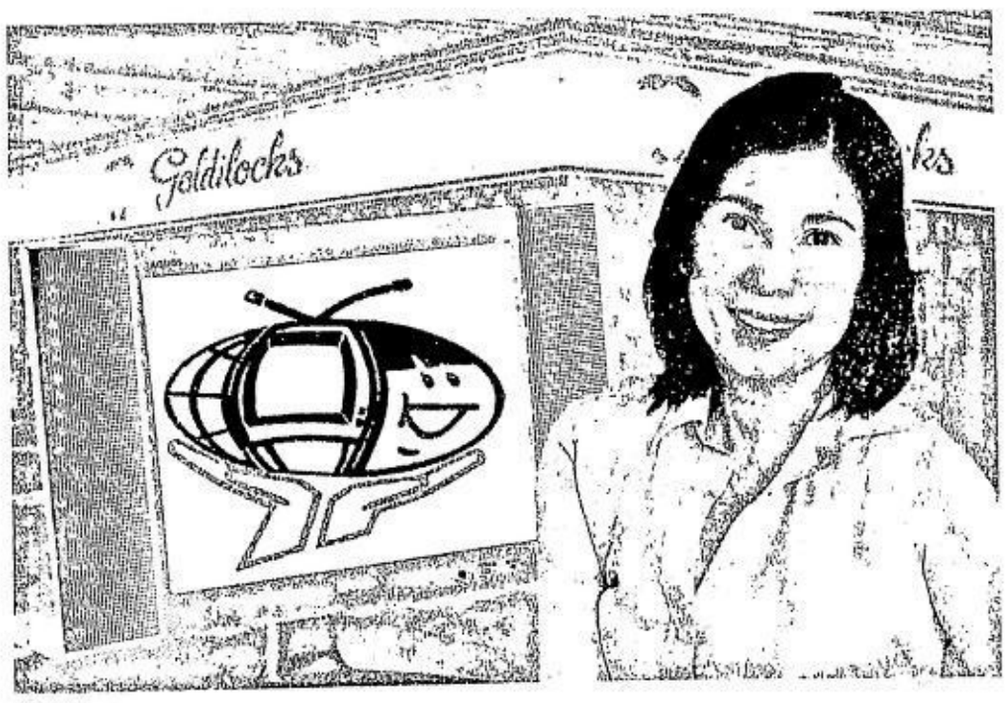

GOLDILOCKS marketing director Pinky Yee and the Anak TV seal awarded to child-friendly television shows.

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

CHILDREN HAVE A SPECIAL PLACE IN THE heart of Goldilocks Bakeshop Inc., one of the country's leading food chains.

Goldilocks, after all, built its 40-year-old business on birthday cakes—the centerpiece of children's parties.

The product line has expanded considerably to include other baked goods, such as the best-selling *polvoron*, and hot meals, like fresh *lumpia*. But Goldilocks marketing director Pinky Yee says Goldilocks' values remain focused on families and the welfare and happiness of children.

CORPORATE CITIZEN

"Children have always been an integral part of our corporate social responsibility." Yee said. "The manner in which we have chosen to carry out our business has formed a strong and natural bond between them and our company.

"In fact, the majority of our marketing strategies are specifically developed to gain their approval, fondness and endorsement."

One of the ways through which Goldilocks expresses its concern for children is its partnership with the Southeast Asian Foundation for Children and Television, a nongovernment group that promotes the responsible use of television.

Safety seal

SEAFCTV conducts a nationwide survey every year on television habits and comes up with the list of programs worthy of the Anak TV seal.

The seal tells parents that the show is safe for their children to watch without their supervision.

Goldilocks was one of the founding partners when SEAFCTV was set up in 1996. The firm continues to provide funds and advice to the group as part of its mandate to promote the well-being of children.

"We became involved in the project because we needed to support a cause that is close to our core values," Yee said. "And we believe that this is a noble cause because television is now very influential on children, especially with both parents now working."

She said television's power can be harnessed to help children, and it is SEAFCTV's goal to find those programs that have been developed with children in mind.

"In terms of being a tool to help in a child's development, television can be a powerful ally," she said. "There are many educational and child-oriented programs that have studied their content carefully, and have taken advantage of the latest trends in child psychology."

Aside from the partnership with SEAFCTV, Goldilocks supports other child-centered programs, such as ABS-CBN Foundation's Bantay Bata 163, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Philippine Parenting Convention.

Goldilocks is also a firm supporter of LIFE, which helps children suffering from leukemia. Last February, Goldilocks gave cookie houses decorated by well-known personalities to the children as a Valentine's gift.

LIFE also benefited last year from the sale of the commemorative CD featuring "Araw Mo," which Goldilocks produced as part of its 40th anniversary celebration.

Conservation

For this year, Goldilocks has added environmental conservation to its growing list of causes.

"Next to education, we feel that environmental conservation must be supported because of the growing concern that, one day, we will no longer have any fresh air," Yee explained.

Goldilocks again partnered with ABS-CBN Foundation to push the Bantay Kalikasan project.

Last year, the Goldilocks management team went to the La Mesa Watershed to plant trees. This year, it will extend its campaign to include wide-scale recycling campaign together with its customers.

"We will probably come up with infomercials on recycling," Yee said. "This is an offshoot of what we are already doing at all our manufacturing facilities, such as waste water treatment and recycling."

She said Goldilocks would also like to help spread the knowledge on nongovernment organizations involved in recycling, so that the customers who have recyclable materials can just contact these NGOs that can take care of their recyclable waste.

DTI pushes for innovative designs as SME trade fair opens

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY is pushing for the promotion of design skills among small and medium enterprises as this year's five-day National Trade Fair kicked off at the SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City.

Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila said the DTI was aiming for a 12-percent growth in NTF sales to P92.6 million from last year's P82.44 million.

"Good design will help push the growth of SMEs' revenue streams, especially those engaged in the production of consumer products like processed food and beverages, fashion, including home style and living," Favila said.

Favila said that this year's NTF aims to encourage SMEs to adopt good design, and help them in quality production and competitive pricing.

He said that with the help of the Product Development and Design Center of the Philippines (PDDCP), 1,363 new designs would be introduced during the show, which used local skills and homegrown materials.

"These designs are a product of close coordination between the PDDCP designers and the SME operators, from conceptualization to prototyping," Favila explained.

The NTF also highlights the DTI's One Town, One Product (OTOP) Program that has already launched 1,986 new products with new products and designs from selected towns in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Some of the enterprises to be highlighted during the NTF are those of the T'boli women of South Cotabato, Mangyan Hanunoo, Mangyan Iraya and Mangyana Alangan of Mindoro, Palaw'anon and Tagbanua of Palawan, Higaonon of Bukidnon, the women of Maguindanao, weavers of Negros Oriental and Bolinao weavers of Pangasinan.

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Industry Evolutions

Retail	The battle between the Department Stores vs the Boutique Shops
Advertising Agencies	How advertising agencies are addressing the challenges of specialist marketing communications companies
New Media	New Trends in Internet Marketing/Google Marketing Secrets
Consumer	The new code on marketing evolution

Day 2

Global Trends

Global Consumer Trends	Da Vinci Consumers: who are they?
Media Trends	Understanding consumer generated media
Innovation Trends	Discovering the way people see medicine and healthcare

Philippine Marketing Trends

Pinoy Consumers	Understanding the Filipino shopping code in Metro Manila
Mobile Marketing	Beyond the special 4 digit code: the new power of Mobile
Marketing to OFWs	Exploring means of reaching 10 million Filipinos abroad
Marketing Forum on Sunrise Industries	Unearthing the Potentials of Sunrise Industries: Medical Tourism, Retirement Villages & BPO

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Refleeting program enters next phase

By Riza T. Olchondra

CEBU PACIFIC PLANS TO BUY 20 MORE AIRbus A320s for $1.3 billion as its expansion program enters a new phase.

Cebu Pacific said on Tuesday that it had completed a $670-million expansion program and would buy more planes to cover increasing passenger volume.

The arrival of Cebu Pacific's 14th Airbus A320 last March 2 concluded the low-cost carrier's initial refleeting program.

The fleet expansion boosted the airline's passenger volume by 57 percent, from 2.2 million in 2005 to 3.5 million in 2006.

The volume started to increase in July last year when the airline retired its DC9s to pave the way for an all-Airbus fleet starting August 2006.

To celebrate its expansion, the airline offered P1 one-way fares for its 20 domestic destinations and five regional destinations.

Cebu Pacific expects growth to continue with the entry of the new planes.

"We are buying up to 20 additional Airbus A320s for our domestic and international operations," president and CEO Lance Gokongwei said in a briefing.

He said the new refleeting cost of $1.3 billion would be funded by a mix of internally generated funds and loans.

The first 10 additional aircraft will be delivered from 2010 to 2012.

Cebu Pacific has the option to get 10 more, to be delivered between 2011 and 2013.

Of the 20 Airbus 320s to be delivered, two will replace aircraft whose leases will expire in 2012.

This will result in 32 Airbus 320s for Cebu Pacific, whose fleet currently stands at 14.

Gokongwei expressed confidence that Airbus can deliver its aircraft on schedule.

Still, with the additional Airbus deliveries still far off, however, he said Cebu Pacific will lease three to four additional Airbus 320s between 2008 and 2009 depending on demand.

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Merrill Lynch bullish on RP, issues buy rating

Investment bank sees little disruption due to May elections

By Doris C. Dumlao

US-BASED INVESTMENT BANKing giant Merrill Lynch is bullish on the Philippines and has recommended that investors buy government offshore bonds or ROPs.

Merrill Lynch is betting on the sustained implementation of fiscal reforms and said it sees little economic disruption from the mid-term elections in May.

In a research paper dated March 7 written by Benoit Anne and Anjali Prakash, Merrill Lynch affirmed an "overweight" or buy recommendation on ROPs, especially the foreign currency bonds maturing in 2017.

"Overweight" is a call to heavily invest in a certain asset class. In this case, the Philippine bonds.

"We do not think that the May elections will raise any major issue. Our baseline scenario is that the presidential camp will obtain a hefty majority at the House of Representatives, which would significantly reduce the risk of political turbulence in our view," the paper said.

If the opposition would end up with at least a third of the seats, Merrill Lynch said this would increase the chances of reviving an impeachment petition against President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The investment bank said a severe defeat for the administration would be costly in terms of macroeconomic reforms, as the focus would dramatically shift to political survival.

"We think that the risk is quite limited at this stage, however. The election for the House of Representatives takes place at the local level, where the presidential camp has more political leverage, it seems," the research said.

"On the other hand, a very strong election result for the presidential camp may accelerate the reform momentum, including the area of tax policy," it said.

The investment bank sees a tight result for the Senate, but noted this would have little impact on the overall political environment.

In recent weeks, it said the Senate had demonstrated that it could efficiently work with the House, as illustrated by the enactment of a national budget for 2007.

As such, the investment bank concluded that the macroeconomic impact of the elections would be limited.

"We do not think that there is a major risk of slippage on the expenditure front," it added.

Merrill Lynch said the Philippine economic team remained committed to fiscal adjustment and would likely attain its deficit ceiling of P63 billion for this year. It added that having a balanced budget next year was high on the government's agenda.

"We think that the main issue on the fiscal front will once again be on tax revenue performance. The Bureau of Internal Revenue, the largest tax agency, will continue to be the main factor behind the success—or the failure—of the authorities' fiscal strategy over the medium term," it said.

"The good news is that the authorities seem to be working secretly on a new package of revenue measures that may cement the fiscal adjustment in the period ahead, but they were not ready to disclose any detail at this stage. If confirmed, this would somehow ease the burden on the BIR," it added.

On the macroeconomic front, Merrill Lynch said inflation would likely remain moderate, the external sector quite robust and growth prospects healthy in the near term.

It has projected that the growth in gross domestic product will increase from 5.4 percent last year to 5.8 percent this year and up to 6 percent next year.

Merrill Lynch also said that some of the credit rating agencies may raise the outlook on sovereign debt to "positive" from "stable" later this year, depending on the conduct of the elections and the sustainability of key reforms.

"For a full rating upgrade, we think that it will have to wait until next year," the research note said.

Fitch Ratings currently rates the Philippine sovereign risk at two notches below the much-coveted investment grade, Standard & Poor's at three notches below and Moody's at four notches below—all with a "stable" outlook.

A "positive" outlook means there is a high probability of an actual credit rating upgrade within 12 to 24 months.

Economic managers welcomed Merrill Lynch's bullish assessment.

"We are pleased that Merrill Lynch has recognized the economic team's commitment to fiscal consolidation as reflected by the full implementation of the EVAT (expanded value-added tax) last year," Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said.

"This, in addition to other tax administrative measures, has helped successfully bring down the national government deficit in 2006 to below program," Teves added.

"We are equally committed this year to quality spending on critical infrastructure and social services that will help us keep our upward growth trajectory," he said.

Notification

The Fifth Employment Permit System-Korean Language Test (EPS-KLT)

According to the M.O.U (Memorandums of Understanding on the sending of workers to the Republic of Korea) between the Ministry of Labor of Korea and the Department of Labor and Employment of the Philippines, anyone wishing to work in Korea should apply for the EPS-KLT. Those who pass the test can make applications for a job under the Employment Permit System. The International Korean Language Foundation (IKLF) executes the Fifth Employment Permit System-Korean Language Test (EPS-KLT) as follows:

- **Test date**: May 6th (Sunday), 2007
- **Test duration**: 2:00 P.M. ~ 3:30 P.M.
- An applicant should arrive at a test room by 1:00 p.m., for instructions on the test procedure.

Test domains and relevant details

Test Domain	Number of Questions	Total Score	Time
Listening	25	100	40 min
Reading	25	100	50 min
Total	50	200	90 min

- There is no interval between the listening and the reading test. In order to pass, the applicant must get at least 40 points in either test domain, and the total score of two domains must be at least 120 points.

Test venue: to be announced
(on the POEA's website and the IKLF's website 5 days in advance of the test date)

Eligibility for the EPS-KLT
- applicants aging from 18 to 39(inclusive);
- applicants who have not been convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment or a more severe punishment;
- applicants who have no record of deportation or departure orders from the Republic of Korea;
- applicants who are not restricted from departure from the Philippines.

Application details

1) Application period
- April 2nd, 2007 ~ April 20th, 2007
(No official business on holidays and weekends)

2) Application sites
- Luzon
  - Occupational Safety and Health Center (of DOLE)
  North Avenue corner Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Metro Manila
- Visayas
  - POEA Regional Center
  Mezzanine Floor, LDM Bldg.
  M.J. Cuenco Avenue corner Legaspi St., Cebu City
- Mindanao
  - POEA Regional Center
  2nd Floor, AMYA 2 Bldg. (fronting SM Davao)
  R. Quimpo Boulevard corner Tulip Drive, Matina, Davao City

3) Ceiling on the number of applicants
- 10,000: male 9,000; female 1,000

Applicants will be considered on a "first-come, first-served" basis

	Manila (for Luzon)	Cebu (for Visayas)	Davao (for Mindanao)	Subtotal	Total
Male	9,000			9,000	10,000
Female	500	250	250	1,000	

4) Options for the Applicant
- An applicant can apply to the three application sites above either individually or as part of a group.

Other requirements for EPS-KLT
1) **EPS-KLT Application Form**
2) **Identification card (along with a copy of passport)**
3) **3 Photographs (4.5cm X 3.5cm)**
4) **Medical checkup**

An applicant who does not include his/her medical checkup in the application period must submit it later.

Examination Fee
- US$30 or its equivalent in peso

Requirements for admission to the test room
- admission card (for the test), passport, and pen

An applicant's passport is acceptable, but driver's license, ID for public service, student ID etc. are not valid for test room admission.

Announcement of successful candidacy
1) Date: May 25th, 2007 (Friday)
2) Official announcement sites
- IKLF's website (http://ww.glokorean.org)
- POEA's website (http://www.poea.gov.ph)

Validity of the certificate
The certificate is valid for two years from the test date.

Further information
- The IKLF shall send an applicant's test results to the POEA central office within three weeks of the test date. An EPS-KLT certificate is available upon his/her visit to the POEA central (Mandaluyong) office or its regional (Cebu/Davao) office.
- An applicant should not carry mobile phones (or any illegal items) during the test.
- An applicant caught cheating in the test will be disqualified and cannot re-apply for the test for the following two years.
- In case an applicant loses his/her admission ticket, the testing center can reissue it only if he/she presents an acceptable ID or passport.

- Passing the EPS-KLT does not guarantee an applicant's complete employment in Korea. It indicates only that he/she is entitled to be on the roster of job seekers.
- If an applicant either fails a physical checkup or has previous record of illegal foreign work, he/she will be disqualified.

The EPS-KLT is supervised by:
- The Ministry of Labor of the Republic of Korea

The EPS-KLT is administered by:
- The International Korean Language Foundation

The EPS-KLT is supported by:
- Philippine Overseas Employment Administration

(PDI–March 14, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Pilar Street, Zamboanga City

SECTION I. INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Zamboanga City Water District, through its Bids And Awards Committee II (BAC II), invites Suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

PR NO.	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT (ABC)	COST OF BID DOCUMENTS	DATE OF ISSUANCE OF BID DOCUMENTS	DATE OF PRE-BID CONFERENCE	DATE OF SUBMISSION/ OPENING OF BIDS
9549	Janitorial Services to be assigned at Water Treatment Plant Division	P4,563,000.00	P2,000.00	March 12 to 21, 2007	March 23, 2007	April 4, 2007

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules & Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process of the Eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall be advanced to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall be then awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedures.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT and inspect the Bidding documents at the address given below during office hours (8:00 - 5:00 pm).

All Bids must be accompanied by a ***Bid Security in the form of Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's or Manager's Check in the amount of One Percent (1%) of the Approved Budget Cost.*** Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid Opening shall be at the 2nd Floor, ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT Main Office Building, Pilar St., Zamboanga City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representative's who choose to attend at the address below.

The ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time or prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Mr. Noel M. Kawaguchi
Pilar St., Zamboanga City 7000
Telephone NO. (062) 991-1556
Email:
Fax: (062) 991-2799

(Sgd.) **LEONARDO REY D. VASQUEZ**
BAC II Chairman

(PDI – Mar. 14, 2007)

HOME DEVELOPMENT MUTUAL FUND

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

SUPPLY, DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION OF MODULAR PARTITIONS AND FURNITURE AT PAG-IBIG FUND BRANCH OFFICES

The **Pag-IBIG FUND**, through its Bids and Awards Committee-Goods & Services, intends to apply the sum of Twelve Million Seven Hundred Sixty Thousand Six Hundred Thirty Two and 00/100 Pesos (P12,760,632.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the SUPPLY, DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION OF MODULAR PARTITIONS AND FURNITURE AT PAG-IBIG FUND BRANCH OFFICES. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

The Pag-IBIG FUND now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Supply, Delivery and Installation of Modular Partitions and Furniture for PAG-IBIG Fund Branch Offices. Delivery of the goods is required within sixty (60) calendar days from receipt of Notice of Award.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Act", and is restricted to Filipino citizen/s sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section III of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the Pag-IBIG FUND and inspect the Bidding Documents at the Procurement Division, General Services Department, Room 704, The Atrium of Makati, Makati Avenue, Makati City starting March 14, 2007, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the Procurement Division, General Services Department, Pag-IBIG FUND, 7th Floor, The Atrium of Makati, Makati Avenue, Makati City starting March 14, 2007 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Nine Thousand Pesos (P9,000.00) only. The method of payment will be in the form of cash or manager's/cashier's check payable to Pag-IBIG FUND. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The Pag-IBIG FUND will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on March 22, 2007 at 2:00 in the afternoon at the Arnel Taduran Hall, Room 602, The Atrium of Makati, Makati Avenue, Makati City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered on April 3, 2007 at the Arnel Taduran Hall, Room 602, The Atrium of Makati, Makati Avenue, Makati City at 9:00 in the morning. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in an amount equivalent to a percentage of the ABC to bid in the form of cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check and two and a half percent (2 1/2%) of the ABC in the form of surety bond. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be held on April 3, 2007 at 9:00 in the morning at the Arnel Taduran Hall, Room 602, The Atrium of Makati, Makati Avenue, Makati City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives.

The Pag-IBIG FUND reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

For further inquiries and/or information, please call Messrs. Wilfrido Nacito S. Reyes and Jose Maria M. Diaz at 8114262, 8945815 or visit our Corporate Website at **http://www.pagibigfund.gov.ph** or e-mail us at **gsd@pagibigfund.gov.ph.**

BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE
GOODS & SERVICES

By:

(Sgd.) **DELIA L. BERNARDO**
Vice President Administration Group and
Vice Chair, BAC-GS

(PDI - March 14, 2007)

MOTORING

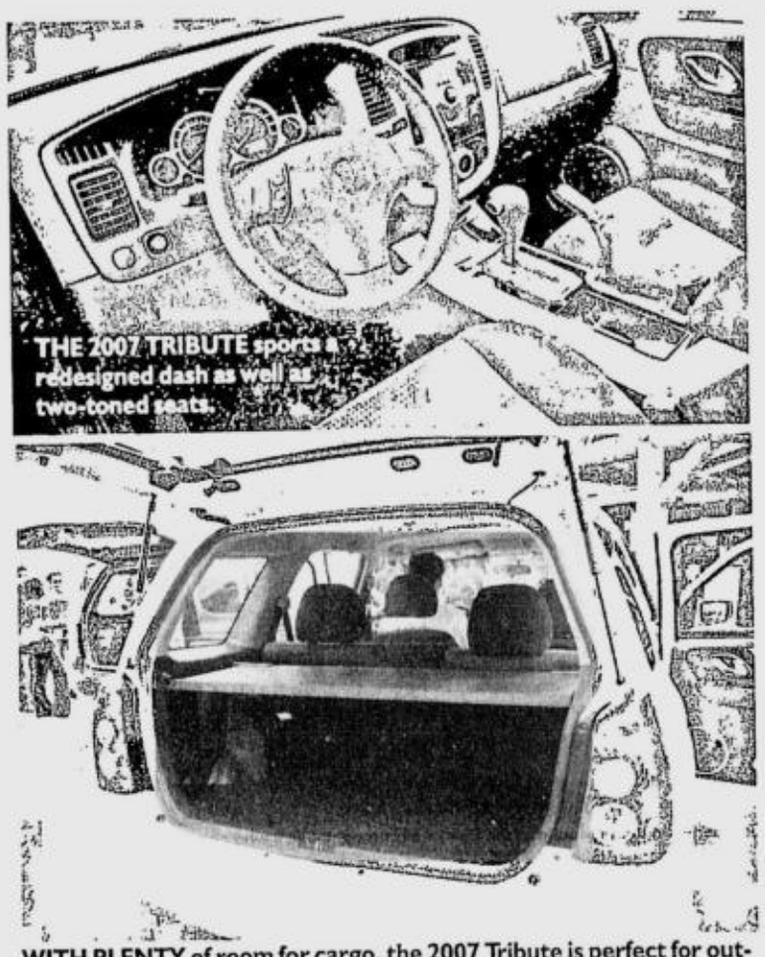
E-mail: pr_motoring@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

...s your feedback: Inquirer mtr name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

WITH A TOTALLY redesigned front face, the new Tribute arrives in the Philippine market.

New Tribute continues Mazda's sporty image



THE 2007 TRIBUTE sports a redesigned dash as well as two-toned seats.

WITH PLENTY of room for cargo, the 2007 Tribute is perfect for out-of-town trips or just going to the nearby supermarket.

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

A FRESH-LOOKING Mazda Tribute has arrived.

Sporting a larger, bolder grille—now with a bigger Mazda emblem—and a restyled front bumper and headlights as well as side mirrors that now have integrated turn indicators, the 2007 Tribute somewhat captures some of the sporty themes that runs through the Mazda lineup.

"The 2007 Tribute is for those who desire a bit of sports car character in their SUV. In this case, Mazda further enhanced its suspension system, tuning it for a firmer ride," described Gerry Alejandro, Mazda Philippines managing director during the compact SUV's launch at the Tagaytay Highlands.

One variant

In the Philippines, the 2007 Tribute will only be available in 2.3-liter gasoline engine and with a floor-mounted, 4-speed automatic transmission.

Mazda Philippines decided on this move considering the vehicle's 16-valve inline four-cylinder engine offers the best of both worlds: ample power (at 155 horsepower) yet fuel-efficient and has excellent emission performance (meeting Euro III emission regulations).

Spacious interior

The 2007 Tribute is spacious inside with generous seating accommodation for five.

The two-toned seats are positioned to provide its occupants an unrestricted view of its surroundings.

The flat cargo area can be easily extended by the 60/40 split-fold rear seats and quick access is provided by the flip-up tailgate window.

The dash is also updated with a brand-new radio and automatic climate control with digital readout.

"The new Mazda Tribute would make an excellent traveling companion. With its stylish, sporty design, nimble handling and impressive engine performance, as well as ample cargo capacity, the 2007 Tribute is indeed, a perfect choice for car buyers who clearly want to stand apart from the crowd," Alejandro said.

A tired Ranger

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

I'VE BEEN HOUNDING THE CURRENT MODel Ranger for quite some time already. My personal interest in this vehicle started when the marketing and public relations services of Ford Philippines decided to unveil the truck and its abilities at the Batangas Racing Circuit (BRC) of all places.

Praise and congratulations shot out across the motoring media; someone from the beat even told me that the Ranger handled as well as a sedan. I snickered loudly at the dynamic comparison. Something was obviously afoot and I needed to get to the bottom of things.

So finally after months of waiting, the new Ranger and I got to spend a weekend together. With a reputation to uphold and a skeptical hack to impress, the pressure was on this media-declared marvel of a truck to deliver. Half an hour into my own late night Batangas test drive, on some uphill two-lane road with twisty, tattered tarmac sections, the nature of this Ranger was starting to become evident.

Gratifying pull

Everyone talks about the engine that literally powers the Ranger. Add me to the long list of the impressed then please. The 3.0-liter common pressure rail, turbocharged diesel is all about gratifying pull. With torque numbers in the 380-Nm range and engine heave available from about 2,000 rpm, this truck hauls, period.

Mated to a utility-oriented but well-spaced, 5-cog manual transmission, the Ranger is a pleasure to take up to speed. The speedometer reads all the way to 180 kph but practical acceleration ends somewhere in the 150 kph range. Now, why anyone would make a pickup truck this fast is a serious question in my mind.

Advice to the reader: The Ranger unit that was lent had obviously lived a rough and abused life despite its relative newness. The suspension was out of whack. Alignment was shot. The brake pedal felt like it would go through the floor pan. Water had probably seen the interior of the cabin. To get reincarnated as this particular test unit would truly be a sign of really bad, past-life karma—the kind usually assigned to liars, cheats and those who answer phone calls in movie theaters. You get the picture.

What we have here is a truck with less than a year's registration but carrying the scars and damage from what felt like a couple of years of hard use. The sedan-like handling quoted by my fellow motoring hack was nowhere to be found but the truck behaved typically as a well worn pickup should have—like a bull on roller skates. In fact, a Ranger driven at BRC, in this state, would have scared me into soiling myself.

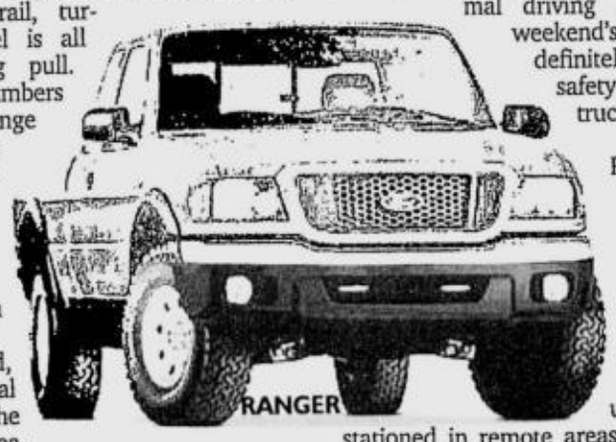
Definitely owe my life

It was only through the antilock brakes, the brake stabilization and the trick differential that this truck was pushed ever so slightly over normal driving limits during the weekend's test session. I very definitely owe my life to the safety features of this truck.

The state that the Ranger was in also gives insight into how it will behave given the usual service life and maintenance that real work trucks undergo. It would be typical for a product like this to get stationed in remote areas, seeing civilization only for repairs and emergencies.

After all the use and abuse, this is a truck that is still quite drivable given the lack of mechanical sympathy that it was obviously shown. Someone probably tried to see if this was a tough truck ready for the rough and tumble. I cringe thinking what kind of roads and conditions it has seen.

In the end, the Ford Ranger has to be assessed for what really counts in product from this segment. From the drive and ride feel, it seems that this truck had taken a licking and was still very much ready, willing and able to perform more work. The bonus in this entire equation is that when I asked it to play, this tired Ranger did not really disappoint.



ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza is out of the country. Her column will resume next week.

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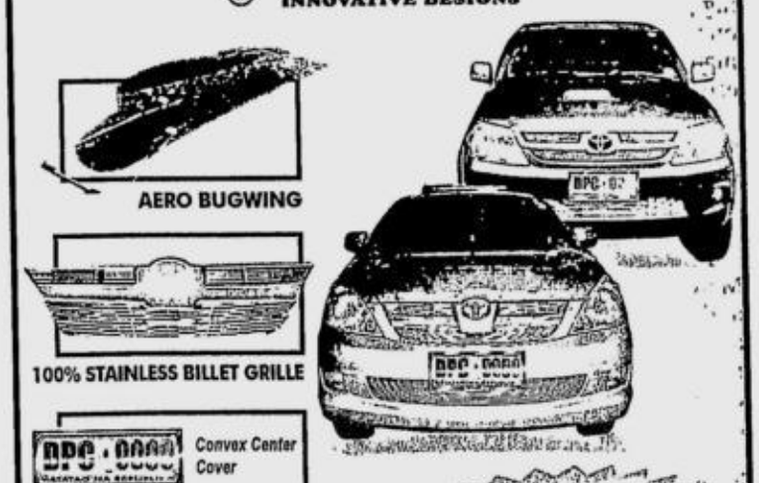

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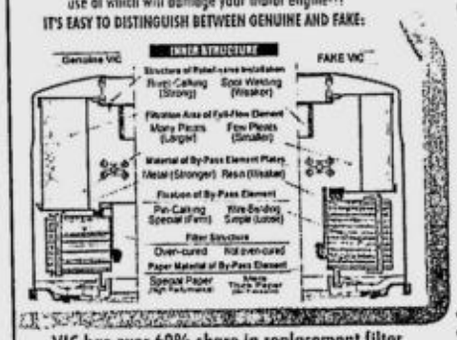

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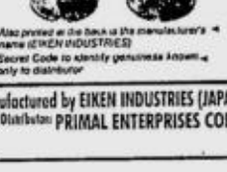

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DISTINGUISHING EXTERNAL FEATURES	GENUINE VIC	FAKE VIC
PROD. CODE	COMPUTER PRINTED	None or Silk-screen printed
SEAM LINE	FLAT SEAM CONSTRUCTION	Rounded Seam Construction
BODY PAINT	POWDER COATING, fully coated up to INNER SEAM LINE	Filter body enamel painted, some painted up to seam line only
METAL HOUSING	THICKER, CORROSION-RESISTANT COATING	Substandard, below specs. When cut open, corroded metal is normally seen inside
WEIGHT	HEAVIER BY AS MUCH AS 30%	

ATTENTION DEALERS & OUTLETS:
Buy direct from a major distributor to ensure that the VIC Filters you are buying are not mixed with fake goods.

Manufactured by EIKEN INDUSTRIES (JAPAN)
Eiken Industries is an OEM supplier to several motor assemblers in Japan.
Major Distributor: PRIMAL ENTERPRISES CORPORATION Tel. Nos.: 376-2836 ■ 376-2837 ■ 376-4661 ■ 412-0045
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March 29-April 01 2007

World Trade Center - Metro Manila

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Motul Skyline GT-R from Japan GT series
- Ford No Boundaries off-road track
- Modern Mobility vehicles from entry level to ultra-luxury class
- Public debuts of year 2007 new models
- TOP GEAR exotic car display
- FHM Magazine models special appearances
- On-road test drives from the country's leading car makers
- Exciting raffle prizes

FEATURING: STUNT DRIVING SHOW by RUSS SWIFT (U.K.)

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2. 0.7 m³ Backhoe Operator (1 or more)
3. 20T Vibrate Compactor (1 or more)
4. 3 m³ Payloader Operator (1 or more)
5. Heavy Bulldozer Operator (1 or more)
6. Heavy Dump Truck Operator (5 or more)
7. Mechanical and Heavy Equipment Supervisor (1 or more)
8. Heavy Equipment and Dump Truck Maintenance staff (5 or more)
9. Civil Engineer (2 or more) -with at least 5 years experience in civil works and development in ECO Zone, industrial park or any Subdivision

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Male (at least 25-45 years of age)
- High School/ College Graduate
- Hardworking
- With a positive outlook towards industry work
- Necessary with experience
- Can speak and understand English

IF YOU THINK YOU ARE QUALIFIED, CAPABLE TO DO THE JOB, WILLING TO WORK WITH US AT ***Rosario Cavite, Economic Zone*** AND BE A PART OF OUR GROWING AND COMPETITIVE COMPANY, KINDLY BRING YOUR BIO-DATA/ RESUME AT:
HRD (S) PTE., FTI OFFICE located and LOT 38 MALUNGGAY ST., FTI COMPLEX, TAGUIG, METRO MANILA
or you may call SIMON or BONG at ***# (02) 837-9784/ # (02) 837-7797***

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS

TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS:

Please be advised that the annual meeting of the stockholders of **ASIAN HOSPITAL, INC.** (the "Corporation") will be held on **April 25, 2007, Wednesday, at 10:00 a.m.** at the Multi-Purpose Hall, 4th Floor, Asian Hospital and Medical Center, 2205 Civic Drive, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City, with the following agenda:

AGENDA

I. Call to Order
II. Certification of Notice and Quorum
III. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on July 25, 2006
IV. Presentation of the Report of the President and Chief Executive Officer
V. Presentation of the Audited Financial Statements of the Corporation for the Year Ended 2006
VI. Ratification of the Corporate Acts of the Board of Directors since June 30, 2006
VII. Approval of the Amendment of Article IV, Section 4 of the Amended By-Laws of the Corporation
VIII. Approval of the Merger of the Corporation and Health Care Properties, Inc.
IX. Election of Directors for 2007 to 2008
X. Appointment of External Auditors for 2007 to 2008
XI. Adjournment

Stockholders who may not be able to attend the aforesaid meeting in person but wish to participate through a proxy may send a Proxy Instrument to the Corporate Secretary not later than 5:00 p.m. of April 19, 2007, at the following address:

VICENTE D. GEROCHI IV
ASIAN HOSPITAL, INC.
c/o 3rd Floor, SSHG Law Centre
105 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CORPORATION IS NOT SOLICITING PROXIES.

With respect to the election of directors (item IX of the Agenda), stockholders who wish to nominate candidates for directors, including independent directors, must submit their nominations to the Nomination Committee at the following address **not later than 5:00 p.m. of March 21, 2007**:

THE NOMINATION COMMITTEE
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ASIAN HOSPITAL, INC.
4th Floor, Asian Hospital and Medical Center
2205 Civic Drive, Filinvest Corporate City
Alabang, Muntinlupa City
Fax No. 876-5710

All nominations should include (i) the signature of the nominating stockholder, (ii) acceptance and conformity by the nominee, (iii) *curriculum vitae* of the nominee, (iv) a statement that the nominee has all the qualifications and none of the disqualifications as set forth in the Corporation's Manual on Corporate Governance, Section 38 of the Securities Regulation Code ("SRC"), SRC Rule 38, SEC Memorandum Circular No. 02-02 dated April 5, 2002 and SEC Memorandum Circular No. 16-02 dated November 28, 2002, (v) information on the relationship of the nominee to the stockholder submitting the nomination, and (vi) all relevant information about the nominee's qualifications.

March 14, 2007.

(Sgd.) **VICENTE D. GEROCHI IV**
Corporate Secretary

(PDI - March 14, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
CITRA METRO MANILA TOLLWAYS CORPORATION 23/F OMM Bldg., San Miguel Ortigas Ctr. San Antonio, Pasig City	Dodik Marseno Catur Utomo	OIC, Office of the Deputy Chief Executive Officer - Technical Operations & Maintenance
SYDEK CORPORATION Unit 2108, 21/F, West of Ayala, 262 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Hidetsugu Kayanuma	Liaison Officer/ Resident Agent
HUAWEI TECHNOLOGIES PHILS., INC. 53/F PBCom Tower, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Maoping Zheng	Technical Consultant
HUAWEI TECHNOLOGIES PHILS., INC. 53/F PBCom Tower, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Yunzhi Dong	Technical Consultant
PHL-KOR ACADEMY FOR ENGLISH PROFICIENCY INC. 314-D General Vicente Lim, Little Baguio, San Juan, Metro Manila	Youngil Jung	Managing Agent
FASHION TEX 21 CORP. 23 M. Lozada St., Sto. Rosario, Silangan, Pateros, Metro Manila	Young Keun Kwon	General Manager
FASHION TEX 21 CORP. 23 M. Lozada St., Sto. Rosario, Silangan, Pateros, Metro Manila	Wonseok Kwon	Marketing Manager
K-Y & H INC. Unit 202 Alen Condo., 92 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Pasay City	Young Min Kwon	General Manager
KLENT PHARMACS INC. 9 San Francisco St., Kapitolyo, Pasig City	Arup Mukherjee	Training Director
SERVICIO.COM INC. 8/F Pearl Condominium, Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Sheyla Carolina Di Bona	IT Sales Consultant
TAS PLAN INC. 23/F Equitable Bank Tower, Paseo de Roxas, Salcedo Vill., Makati City	Hiroyuki Chida	CAD Manager of Shop Drawing
KENAF EXPORT PHILIPPINES COMPANY, INC. Suite 910 Herrera Tower, 98 V.A. Rufino cor. Valero Sts., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Yoshitaka Kato	Operations Manager
JERON TRAVEL & TOURS CORP. No. 727 Roxas Blvd., Baclaran, Parañaque City	Xiaoyin Gao	Inbound Reservation Staff

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity. For more information, please call 339-2013 & 303-5920.

(PDI - March 14, 2007)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Manila, Philippines
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project / Brief Description	**1 unit – BANKNOTE DISC COUNTING MACHINE with Table Stand**
Approved Budget for the Contract	**US$52,080.00**
Completion Period	**Within sixteen (16) weeks after opening of Letter of Credit**

Prospective bidders should have undertaken a similar contract within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	**14 March – 28 March 2007**
2. Pre-bid Conference	**30 March 2007, 2:00 PM**
3. Opening of Bids	**17 April 2007, 2:00 PM**
4. Bid Evaluation	) These shall be in accordance with the) prescribed periods allowed in the) Implementing Rules & Regulations (IRR)-A) of R.A. No. 9184 dated 10 January 2003
5. Post-qualification	
6. Notice of Award	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **P1,300.00** to the BSP Cashier.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.
Chairman

(PDI–March 14, 2007)

City Government of Zamboanga
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
City Hall, Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA** invites PhilGEPS registered suppliers to apply for the following items.

Name of Projects	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date/Time		Price of Bid Documents (non-refundable)
		Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline/ Opening of Bids	
1. Drugs and Medicines	P3,532,161.00	March 26, 2007	April 10, 2007 10:00 AM	P1,200.00

The Bid documents shall be available at the City Mayor's Office, Procurement Acquisition and Awards Division City Hall, Zamboanga City starting **March 13-20, 2007** upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

The Pre-Bid conference shall be held at the **City Engineer's Office, Conference Hall, City Hall, Zamboanga City.**

The Bidder shall drop and enclose the original of the Technical Proposal in one sealed envelope; whereas, the original of the Financial Proposal shall be enclosed in another sealed envelope. Both envelopes shall then be placed in another single envelope. In the bid box located at the abovementioned address.

For more information, please call the Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Division at telephone no. **[062] 992-7763.**

The **CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) **MARIO D. ARRIOLA (DVM)**
BAC Chairman

(PDI - March 14, 2007)

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NATIONAL CLASSIFIEDS
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NFA A30
POEA B10
PAG-IBIG B10
ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT ... B10

OBITUARIES

"The Lord Is My Shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down the green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul." **Psalm 23:1, 2**

JESUS "Jess" TECSON YAN

In peace and grace joined our Lord Father on March 12, 2007 at the age of 83.

His wife **Aurora** (†); his children and spouses: **Teresita** and **Arthur**, **Arturo** and **Mary Rose**; grandchildren: **Jose Mari**, **Therese Marie**, **Peter Cecilio**; brothers and sisters and their spouses: **Amb. Manuel** & **Eloisa**, **Pilar** & **Antonio** (†), **Josefina** & **Santiago** (†), **Salvador** & **Rufina**, **Jose Jr.** & **Marian**, relatives and friends join in prayer for his eternal repose in heaven.

His remains lie in state at Mount Carmel Church, New Manila, Quezon City. Cremation will be held on Saturday March 17, 2007, 12:30 p.m. at Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, March 18, 2007 at the Mount Carmel-Crypt following the funeral Mass at 9:00 a.m.

ATTY. ROMULO S. BINGHAY

Born December 5, 1935
Pinamungajan, Cebu

Died March 11, 2007
Melbourne, Australia

He is survived by wife **Purita**; children and children-in-law **Mollet** & **Dang**, **Alma**, **Felieus** & **Ann**, **Remus** & **Melanie**, **Rommel** & **Cattleya**, **Cyrus** & **Vanessa**, **Princess** and **Rom**; grandchildren **Rainier**, **Reneve**, **Reggie**, **Jordan**, **Ruiz**, **Czecebel**, **Chaquille**, **Linus**, **Ryle**, **Pilar**, **Chalice** and **Reuben**; siblings **Aniceta**, **Cecilia**, **Asela**, **Luvisminda**, **Marina**, **Urduja**, **Yvonne** and **Edgar**; nephews and nieces.

The family requests the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

FILEMON T. DALISAY

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on March 12, 2007 at the age of 73.

His bereaved wife **BELEN**; children **ARNEL**, **JOSIE**, **JIM** & **JOEL**; other relatives and friends request the readers to join them in praying for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His body lies in state at 2nd Floor, Pagkabuhay Chapel, San Felipe Neri Parish Church, Mandaluyong City.

Interment will be on March 16, 2007 after the 2:30 p.m. Mass at San Felipe Neri Catholic Cemetery, Mandaluyong City.

Republic of the Philippines
Office of the President
Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council
HOUSING AND LAND USE REGULATORY BOARD

BOARD RESOLUTION NO. 797
Series of 2007

APPROVING THE RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING COLUMBARIUM PROJECTS

WHEREAS, there is a proliferation of columbarium projects as principal activity particularly in Metro Manila;

WHEREAS, the existing Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) for Memorial Parks and Cemeteries approved per Board Resolution No. 681, S. of 2000, provides design standards for columbarium only as ancillary activity;

WHEREAS, to foster orderly development and protect the interest of buyers, there is a need to provide specific Rules and Regulations to govern the development and sales of columbarium projects;

WHEREAS, there is a need to harmonize the aforementioned Rules and Regulations with the new IRR of the National Building Code and with other policies and issuances of government agencies concerned;

WHEREAS, the issuance of these Rules and Regulations for Columbarium Projects is deemed necessary for consistency and uniformity in the evaluation and processing of applications for the development of columbarium projects;

WHEREFORE, RESOLVED as it is hereby **RESOLVED** that the Rules and Regulations Governing Columbarium Projects, hereto attached as Annex A, be **APPROVED.**

APPROVED this 31st day of January, 2007.

HON. NOLI L. DE CASTRO
Vice-President of the Philippines and
HUDCC Chairman

ERNESTO L. PINEDA
Undersecretary, DOJ

ROMULO Q.M. FABUL
Chief Executive Officer
and Commissioner

WENCELITO T. ANDANAR
Undersecretary, DILG

TERESITA A. DESIERTO
Commissioner

AUGUSTO B. SANTOS
Deputy Director-General, NEDA

JESUS YAP PANG
Commissioner

JOEL I. JACOB
DPWH

ARTURO M. DUBLADO
Commissioner

Attested by:

CHARITO B. LANSANG
Board Secretary

Annex A

RULES AND REGULATIONS TO GOVERN COLUMBARIUM PROJECTS

Pursuant to Article IV, Section 5 (a), (c) and (r) of Executive Order 648 and in relation to Section 9.2A.2.3 of the Rules and Regulations for Memorial Parks and Cemeteries, the following Rules and Regulations for Columbarium Projects are hereby promulgated by the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB).

RULE I
DEFINITION AND COVERAGE

SECTION 1. Definition of Terms.

A. **Ancillary Use** – use limited to the provision of resting places for cremated human remains of the religious/members of congregation, such as but not limited to priests, ministers, pastors and the like and their spouses, if applicable.
B. **Board** – shall mean the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board
C. **Cinerary Remains/Cremain** – shall mean the ashes resulting from cremation of a dead body.
D. **Columbarium** – shall mean a structure, either freestanding or part of another building, containing niches for the inurnment of cremated human remains.
E. **Cremation** – shall mean a process that reduces human remains to bone fragments of sand-like substance and ashes through combustion and dehydration.
F. **Interment** – shall mean the disposition of human remains by burial in the earth, entombment in a mausoleum or inurnment in a columbarium.
G. **Inurnment** – shall mean placing of cremated remains in an urn.
H. **Niche** – shall mean a compartment used as interment space. Also referred to as cinerarium or vaults in columbarium projects.
I. **Ossuary** – shall mean the interment space for the bones.
J. **Sale or sell** – shall include every disposition for a valuable consideration of a niche or vault in a columbarium project.
It shall also include a contract to sell a contract of purchase or sell, an exchange, an attempt to sell, an option of sale and purchase, a donation with an onerous cause or,any offer to sell or to donate, directly or by an agent, or by a circular, letter or advertisement or otherwise.

SECTION 2. Scope of Application. These Rules and Regulations shall apply to all development, expansion, conversion or alteration of columbarium projects.

SECTION 3. Who shall Apply. Any person who wishes to construct a columbarium or make any alteration in any building for use as columbarium shall first apply for a Development Permit with this Board.

RULE II
MINIMUM DESIGN STANDARDS

SECTION 4. Design Standards and Guidelines for Columbarium Projects.

a. Location
Columbarium projects shall conform with the provisions of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) and Zoning Ordinance (ZO) of the locality. In the absence of any provision on location of columbarium projects, the same can be located in any of the following:

1. Institutional Zone particularly in areas designated for religious structure such as church, seminary, convents and other places of worship or congregation areas.
2. Commercial Zone (C2)
3. Areas within the premises of religious structures owned by a religious congregation.

b. Design Parameters

1. Design and Dimension of Niche/Vault

1.a The dimension of the niche/vault must be able to house an urn or receptacle designed to hold at least 200 cubic inches of cremated human remains. For ossuary niche, such shall have a dimension that can accommodate receptacle for bone remains.
1.b A minimum of 2.0 m passageway shall be provided between interment structures if proposed to be in grid design.
1.c Ladder facility shall be provided for interment and urn retrieval purposes.
1.d Materials and Construction Requirements
All structural framework for the niches/vaults shall be of cast-in-place reinforced concrete, or of structural steel sections, or of concrete over metal decking or of such other non-porous materials, provided however, that construction of all footings, bearing walls, floor slabs and roofs shall be consistent with the construction requirements of the National Building Code of the Philippines.
Water proofing shall be required for niches constructed along a perimeter wall or garden wall.

2. Parking
Parking shall be provided at a ratio of 1:50 vaults or 100 parking slots whichever is lower.

3. Easement
A 5-meter non-buildable buffer shall be observed for projects to be located in commercial zone/area adjoining a residential area.

4. Prayer Room
A prayer room shall be provided with a minimum area of 50 sqm.

5. Comfort Rooms (CR)
Every floor shall be provided with a minimum of 2 comfort rooms: 1 for male with 2 urinals, 1 water closet and 2 lavatories and 1 for female with 3 water closets and 2 lavatories.

6. Elevators and Escalators
Elevators shall be provided for projects five (5) storeys and above.
For projects provided with escalators, the angle of inclination of an escalator shall not exceed 30 degrees from the horizontal. The width between balustrades shall not be less than 560 millimeter nor more than 1.20 meters as provided for in the National Building Code.

c. Light and Ventilation
Sufficient light and ventilation shall be provided pursuant to the provision on Light and Ventilation of the National Building Code of the Philippines.

SECTION 5. Operational Procedure. All columbarium projects shall establish detailed procedures and guidelines to govern its daily operation and maintenance.

SECTION 6. Conversion of Existing Structures to Columbarium Projects. Existing structures may be converted into columbarium projects upon proper application with HLURB and compliance with the requirements of these rules and standards.

RULE III
APPROVAL OF COLUMBARIUM PLAN

SECTION 7. Documentary and Other Requirements.

A. For Preliminary Columbarium Plan Approval (Optional)

1. At least 2 sets of Site Development Plan at a scale ranging from 1:200 to 1:2000 showing the proposed layout, parking, building footprints, etc. duly signed and sealed by a licensed architect.
2. At least 2 sets of vicinity map indicating the adjoining land uses, access, as well as existing facilities and utilities at least within 500 meters from the property boundaries of the project, drawn to any convenient scale and duly signed and sealed by a licensed geodetic engineer.
3. Certified true copy of title(s) free from liens and encumbrances issued not more than one month prior to application.
4. Topographic map duly signed and sealed by a geodetic engineer, if applicable.

Approval of the preliminary columbarium development plan will be valid only for a period of 180 days from date of approval.

B. For Final Columbarium Development Plan Approval

1. All requirements for application for Preliminary Columbarium Plan approval as specified in Sec. 7.A of this Rules.
2. At least 2 sets of columbarium plan at any of the following scales: 1:50; 1:500; or any scale not exceeding 1:500 duly signed and sealed by a licensed architect:
   2.1 floor plan(s)
   2.2 sections and elevations
3. Detailed layout of vault structures
4. Building specifications and estimated cost.
5. Traffic flow management plan/sketch on special occasions to include coordination mechanism with LGUs or appropriate government agency, as may be necessary.
6. Certified true copy of Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC) or Certificate of Non-Coverage (CNC) duly issued by the DENR, whichever is applicable.
7. Right to use or deed of sale of right-of-way for access road and other utilities when applicable.
8. One (1) copy of project study to include the following:
   8.1 Project profile indicating among others, the development cost, total project cost, amortization schedules, sources of financing, marketability, cash flow and work program/project time table;
   8.2 Duly audited balance sheet (certified copy of the original) issued and signed by the authorized official of the applicant and under the latter's authority for corporation and single proprietorship.
   8.3 Income Tax Return (ITR) and tax receipt for single proprietorship duly received by BIR for the last 3 preceding years;
   8.4 Sworn statement declaring assets and/or sources of funds to be used for the project indicating therein the nature and control over such assets and resources for newly formed corporation or single proprietorship enterprise.
   8.5 Certificate of Registration with Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC);
   8.6 Articles of Incorporation or Partnership or Association, amendments thereof and existing by-laws clearly indicating the authority of the applicant to engage in real estate trade particularly in the development and selling of niches/vaults. When an applicant deviated from the intended line of business stipulated in its articles of incorporation or articles of partnership, authorization from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).
   8.7 Corporation by-laws and all implementing amendments, and
   8.8 For corporations statement of capitalization and sources of income and cash flow to support work program.
9. Deed of Restriction
10. Permit to drill from NWRB or certificate of coverage from concerned local franchise holder.

The Columbarium Plan shall be approved and a Development Permit (DP) shall be issued if the project is in conformance with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) and Zoning Ordinance (ZO) and with these Rules, and upon payment of the prescribed processing fee.

A development permit shall be valid for a period of 3 years from date of issuance unless no physical development is introduced.

Issuance of Development Permit (DP) does not exempt the developer from securing permits and clearances from other agencies pursuant to existing laws such as Building Permit (BP) from the City/Municipal Building Official.

RULE IV
REGISTRATION AND LICENSING OF COLUMBARIUM PROJECTS

SECTION 8. Application for Certificate of Registration and License to Sell

The owner of a columbarium project shall register the project with the Board by filing the following in addition to the requirements under Rule III:

1. Sworn registration statement
2. Perpetual Care Maintenance Fund indicating the sources of funds and person/entity responsible for the management of fund.
3. A copy of any circular, prospectus, brochure, advertisement, or communication used or to be used for public offering of subject project and for circulation upon approval by this Board.
4. Sample copy of Contract to Sell
5. Sample deed of donation with onerous cause complying with formal requirements of donation of real property, if applicable. (Suggested legal form attached as Annex A1)
6. Certificate of Ownership/Perpetual Privilege to Use (suggested legal form attached as annex a2)
7. Plan delineating columbarium niche/vault subject of sale
8. Operational procedures which shall include traffic management strategies to and from the columbarium project especially during All Saints Day and All Souls Day.
9. Deed of Restriction
10. Building Permit
11. Performance Bond in any of the following forms:
    11.1 A surety bond amounting to 20% of the cost of the development cost of the unfinished portion of the approved plan issued by a duly accredited bonding company (whether private or government) and acceptable to the Board; or
    11.2 Real Estate Mortgage to be executed by the applicant as mortgagor in favor of the Republic of the Philippines as mortgages, the latter as represented by and acting through the HLURB, over a property other than that subject of application, free from any liens and encumbrances and provided, that the value of the property, computed on the basis of the zonal valuation schedule of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, shall be at least 20% of the total development cost; or,
    11.3 Cash bond equivalent to 10% of the development cost of the unfinished portion of the approved plan which may be in the form of the following:
        a. Fiduciary deposit made with the cashier and/or disbursing officer of the Board;
        b. A certificate of guaranty deposit issued by any bank or financing institution of good standing in favor of the Board for the total development cost;
        c. A letter from any bank of recognized standing certifying that so much has been set aside from the bank account of the applicant in favor of the Board which amount may be withdrawn by the Chief Executive Officer of the Board or his duly authorized representative, at any time the principal fails or refuses to comply with his duties and obligations under the bond contract;
    11.4 Any irrevocable credit line to be utilized in the development of the project from any bank of recognized standing and a refinancing re-structuring program indicating sources of funding from duly accredited funding institutions.

For pre-existing projects any of the forms of performance bond enumerated above may be availed of.

SECTION 9. Registration of Columbarium Projects. All columbarium projects shall be registered with the Board. Failure to register pre-existing columbarium project within 2 years from the effectivity of these rules shall be penalized in accordance with the Schedule of Fines approved by the Board.

SECTION 10. Certificate of Registration. Upon finding that the project may be registered in accordance with the provision of these Rules, the Board shall cause the publication at the expense of the applicant a notice of the filing of the registration statement in 2 newspapers of general circulation; one published in English and another in Pilipino, once a week for 2 consecutive weeks, reciting that a registration statement for the sale of the vaults/niches has been filed with the Board and that the aforesaid registration statement as well as papers attached thereto, are open to inspection during business hours by interested parties. In addition, a 3' x 6' billboard notice of the project shall be posted on the project site until the issuance of the license to sell.

After 2 weeks from the completion of the publication and upon submission of the affidavit of publications, the Board shall in the absence of any impediment, issue a certificate of registration upon payment of the prescribed fees. (Please see Annex A-2)

SECTION 11. License to Sell. No owner or dealer shall sell any disposable vault/ niche in the registered columbarium project without a license to sell issued by the Board.

Upon a finding that the application complies with the above requirements, the Board shall issue a license to sell the vaults/niches in the project or portion thereof covered by the performance bond.

Upon proper application a project may be exempted from securing license to sell if the same is established as an ancillary use.

RULE V
MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SECTION 12. Submission of Annual Reports on Operations. Every owner or dealer of a registered columbarium project shall submit to the Board annual reports on operations showing the extent/status of land development, changes in corporate officers or managers and their addresses within 60 days after the end of each semester. Copies of the corporate reports to the Securities and Exchange Commission shall also be furnished to the Board.

SECTION 13. Display of Certificate of Registration and License to Sell. The certificate of registration and license to sell issued by the Board shall be displayed in a conspicuous place in the principal office of the owner, dealer, broker, as the case maybe and a Xerox copy thereof in all its branches and offices.

SECTION 14. Lost or Destroyed Certificate of Registration or License to Sell. Upon loss or destruction of a certificate of registration or license to sell a duplicate copy thereof may be issued by the Board after satisfactory proof of such loss or destruction and payment of the prescribed fee. The fact that such duplicate has been issued shall be made of record.

SECTION 15. Advertisement. Advertisement through print or broadcast media concerning sale of niches shall be cleared with the Board. Advertisement shall contain among others, the license to sell number of columbarium projects as approved by the Board.

SECTION 16. Time of Completion. Every owner or developer shall construct and provide the facilities, infrastructures, other forms of development which are offered and indicated in the approved plans, brochures, prospectus, printed matters, letters or in any form of advertisement, within one (1) year or within such other period of time as may be fixed by the Board from the date of the issuance of license to sell.

Request for extension to complete development of a project may be granted in cases where non-completion of project is caused by fortuitous events, legal orders, or force majeure and with the written notice to columbarium niche buyers without prejudice to the exercise of their rights.

The request for extension of time for completion shall be accompanied by a revised work program duly signed and sealed by a licensed engineer or architect based on submitted time frame of the owner or developer with project costing and financing scheme therefore. In appropriate cases the Board may require for a renewal of performance bond amounting to 20% of the cost of the unfinished portion of the approved plan, cancel the license to sell if any or issue orders it may deem proper.

SECTION 17. Transfer of Ownership or Change of Name. Request for transfer of ownership and/or change of name may be granted only if there is a deed of absolute sale over the columbarium project sought to be transferred, with an undertaking on the part of the transferee to assume full responsibility for the completion of the development. The requirements in Section 9 of this Rule shall be observed whenever applicable.

Such request for transfer of ownership or change of name shall be published at applicant's expense in a newspaper of general circulation within the city or municipality where the project is located at least once a week for 2 consecutive weeks.

SECTION 18. Alteration of Plan. Request for alteration of project plan may be granted only upon presentation of written conformity or contract of the majority of the niche owners/users in the project.

SECTION 19. Non-forfeiture of Installments/Payments. No installment payment made by the buyer shall be forfeited in favor of the seller when the buyer, after due notice to seller desist from further payment due to the failure of the seller to develop the project according to the approved plans and within the time limit specified in the license to sell. The buyer may, at his option, be reimbursed the total amount paid including amortization interest but excluding delinquency interest thereon at the legal rate.

SECTION 20. Fees. The Board shall collect the fees subject to existing Schedule of Fees approved by the Board.

SECTION 21. Conflicts Between the Owner/Developer and the Buyer. Any conflict that may arise between the owner/developer and the buyer in relation to development, payment of obligations and maintenance shall be resolved by the Board pursuant to Sec. 5.c and r of EO 648.

SECTION 22. Separability Clause. The provision of these Rules are hereby declared separable, and in the event of any such provisions are declared null and void, the validity of all other provisions shall not be affected thereby.

SECTION 23. Transitory Provisions. Provisions on design standards shall apply to new applications and those pending upon the effectivity of this Rule.

SECTION 24. Effectivity. These Rules shall take effect 15 days after its publication once in any newspaper of general circulation.

(PDI – March 14, 2007)

ERRATA

In the NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S of the DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT (DOLE-NCR), the following were inadvertently printed:

Fredrick James Lewis of ejobz.net Inc (SpecOps Laboratories) (published: Feb. 2)

Sung Won Hong of E-world Travel & Tours (published: Feb. 9)

Hyun Sil Jung of Phil-Kyoyook Nara Inc. (published: Feb. 9)

Alexandar Petrovich of Paragon International Customer Care Limited (published: Feb. 24)

Jun Midorikawa of Philippine Hoteliers, Inc.'s position should have read **Sushi Chef** (published: Feb. 24)

MIII Technical Services Corp. should have read **MHI TECHNICAL SERVICES CORP.** (published March 2)

Masahiro Kamiya of Coral Bay Nickel Corporation's position should be **Executive Vice President** and **Assistant to the President** (published: March 6)

OUR APOLOGIES

CHANGE IN SCHEDULE OF CERTAIN BIDDING ACTIVITIES FOR THE BIDDING OF THE MANAGEMENT, OPERATION, MAINTENANCE, DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF PHASE II (CONTAINER TERMINAL "A-1") AT THE PORT OF BATANGAS

Pursuant to the 12 March 2007 agreement during the Pre-eligibility Conference for the above bidding, the SBAC hereby resets the schedule of certain bidding activities indicated in the Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid, as follows:

BIDDING ACTIVITY	FROM	TO
Submission of Letters of Intent (LOI)	Not later than March 14, 2007, 4:00 p.m.	Not later than March 23, 2007, 4:00 p.m.
Last day of submission of the accomplished eligibility documents and opening of eligibility documents	March 15, 2007, 2:00 p.m.	March 26, 2007, 2:00 p.m.

MR. BENJAMIN B. CECILIO
Chairperson
Special Bids and Awards Committee
Philippine Ports Authority
Room 201, Office of the AGM for Operations
2nd Flr. Marsman Bldg., 22 Muelle de San Francisco
South Harbor, Port Area
Manila, Philippines
Email Address: bbc@ppa.com.ph
Tel. No. : (02) 527-4726
Fax No.: (02) 527-6445

(Sgd.) **Benjamin B. Cecilio**
SBAC Chairperson

(PDI–March 14, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Pilar Street, Zamboanga City

SECTION I. INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Zamboanga City Water District, through its Bids And Awards Committee I (BAC I), invites Suppliers/Manufacturers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

PR NO.	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT (ABC)	COST OF BID DOCUMENTS	DATE OF ISSUANCE OF BID DOCUMENTS	DATE OF PRE-BID CONFERENCE	DATE OF SUBMISSION/ OPENING OF BIDS
9570	Water Meter ½"Ø- multi-jet super dry type water meters, overall length should be 190mm without the tailpieces for stock replenishment	P2,250,000.00	P1,500.00	March 9 to 16, 2007	March 20, 2007	April 3, 2007
9617	Brass Corporation Stop, Adaptor, Angle Meter Valve & Nipple for use at the Special Task Force	345,505.00	370.00	March 9 to 16, 2007	March 20, 2007	April 3, 2007

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules & Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, **as specified in Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility** check will be opened. The process of the Eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall be advanced to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall be then awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT and inspect the Bidding documents at the address given below during office hours (8:00 - 5:00 pm).

All Bids must be accompanied by a ***Bid Security in the form of Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's or Manager's Check in the amount of One Percent (1%) of the Approved Budget Cost.*** Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid Opening shall be at the 2nd Floor, ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT Main Office Building, Pilar St., Zamboanga City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representative's who choose to attend at the address below.

The ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time or prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Mr. Noel M. Kawaguchi
Pilar St., Zamboanga City 7000
Telephone No. (062) 991-1556
Fax: (062) 991-2799

(Sgd.) **ARNULFO A. ALFONSO**
BAC I Chairman

(PDI – Mar. 14, 2007)

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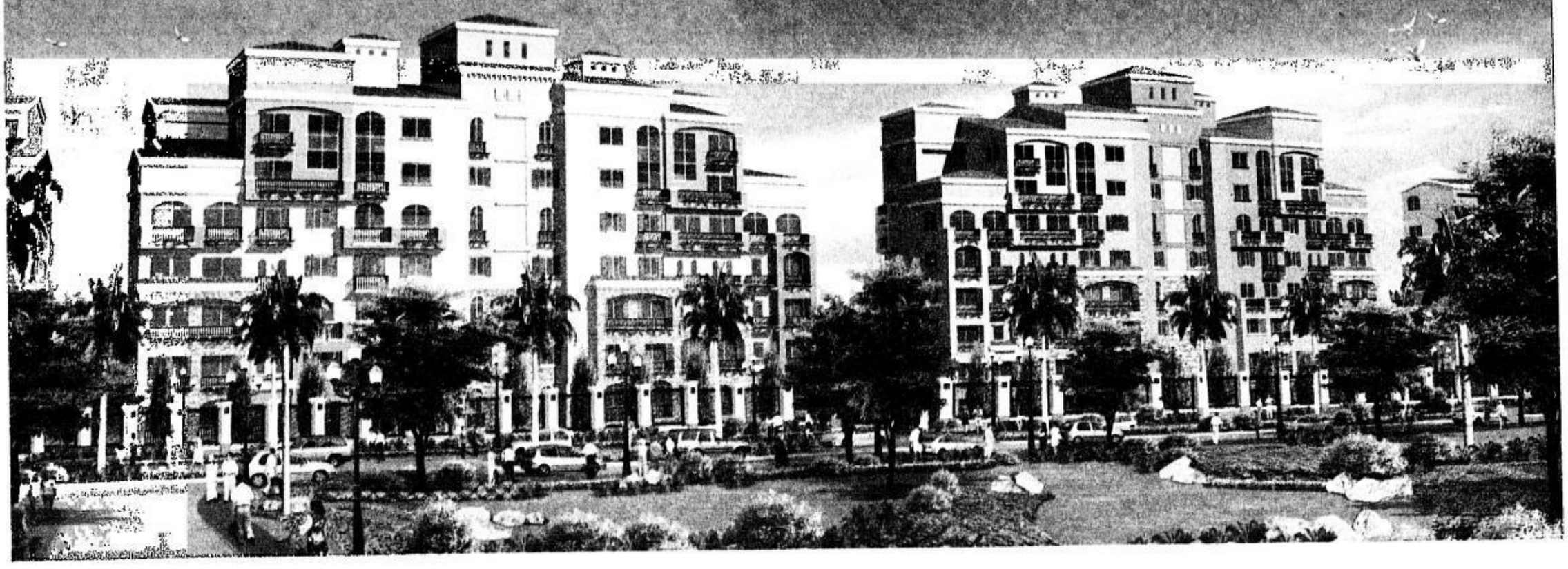
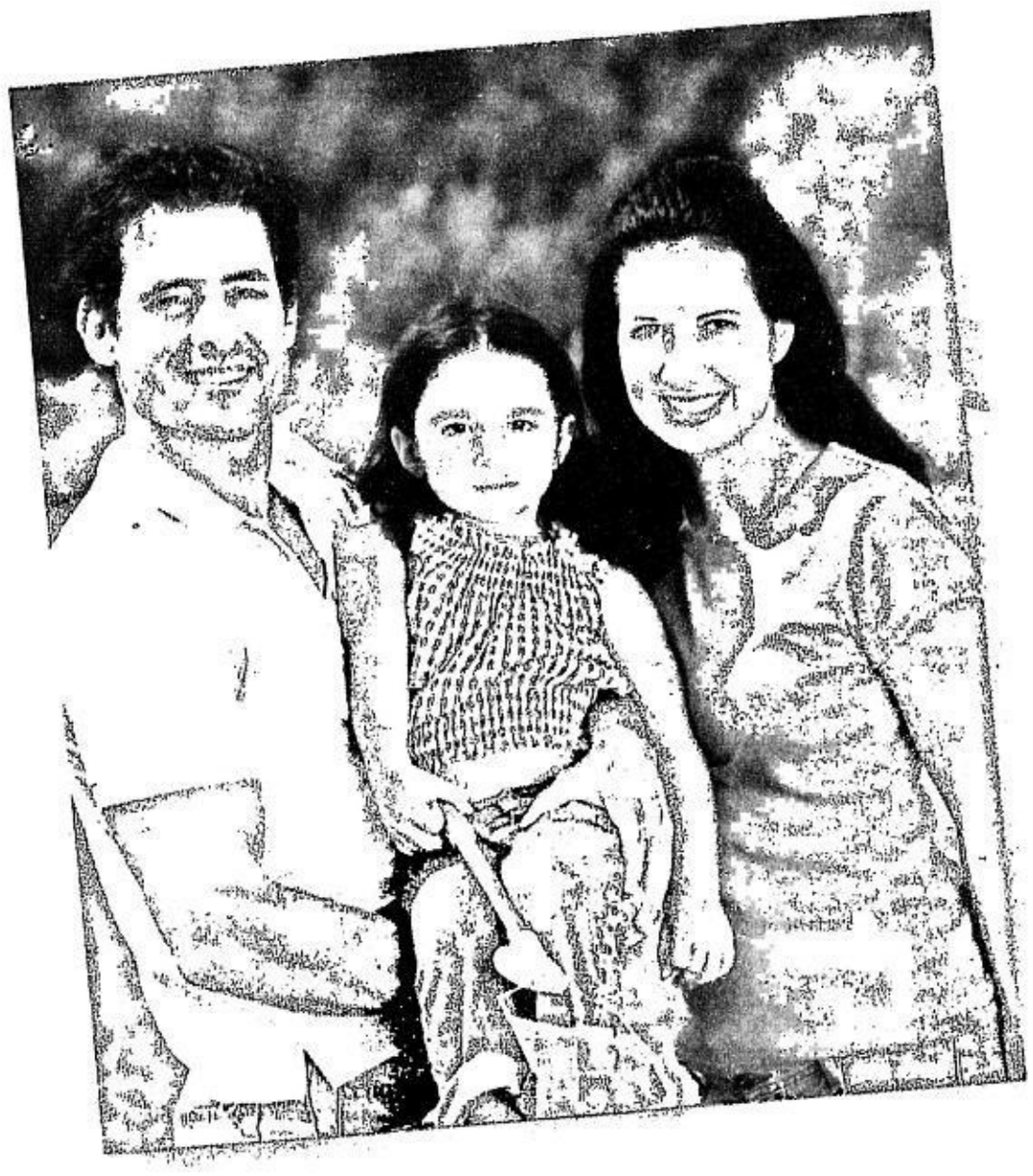
finest neighborhood.





McKinley Hill
GARDEN VILLAS

Limited Edition Residences
PHASE 2

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Here, home is synonymous to a hideaway. Live in a picturesque, Andalusian-inspired enclave that echoes the gentle allure of Costa del Sol in southern Spain. Delight in the dramatic hues, the decorative balcony grillwork and the wide windows with graceful arches. Kick back and enjoy yourself in a unit with 1 to 3 bedrooms. Or in a 3-bedroom loft-style home. And since each residential cluster hosts no more than 30 suites, enjoy the utmost privacy and an abundance of living space.

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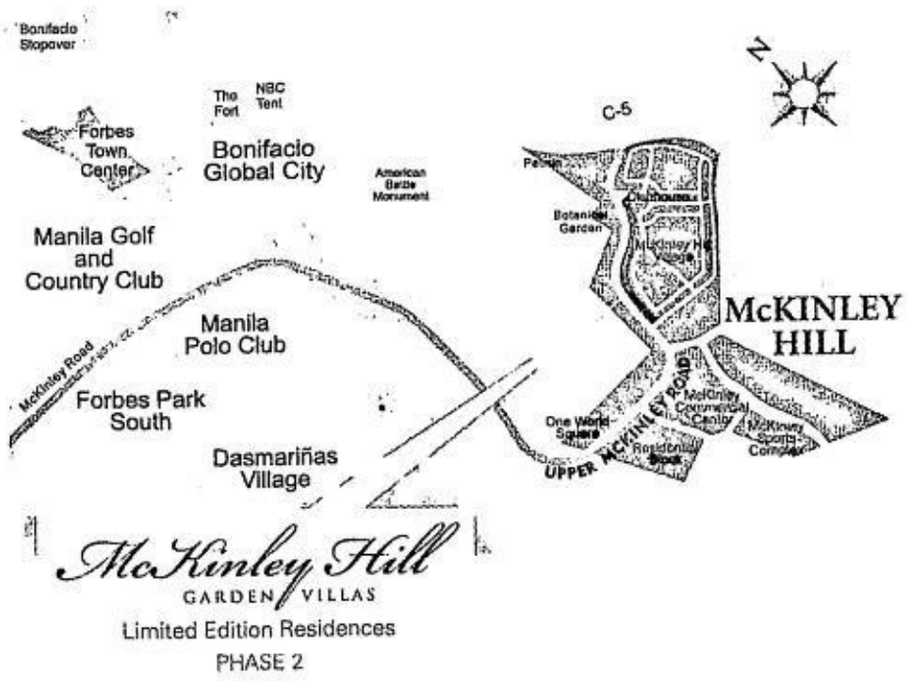
Step up to the country's finest community. Strictly reserved for a fortunate few. McKinley Hill Garden Villas.



McKinley Hill
GARDEN VILLAS
Limited Edition Residences
PHASE 2

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LIFESTYLE

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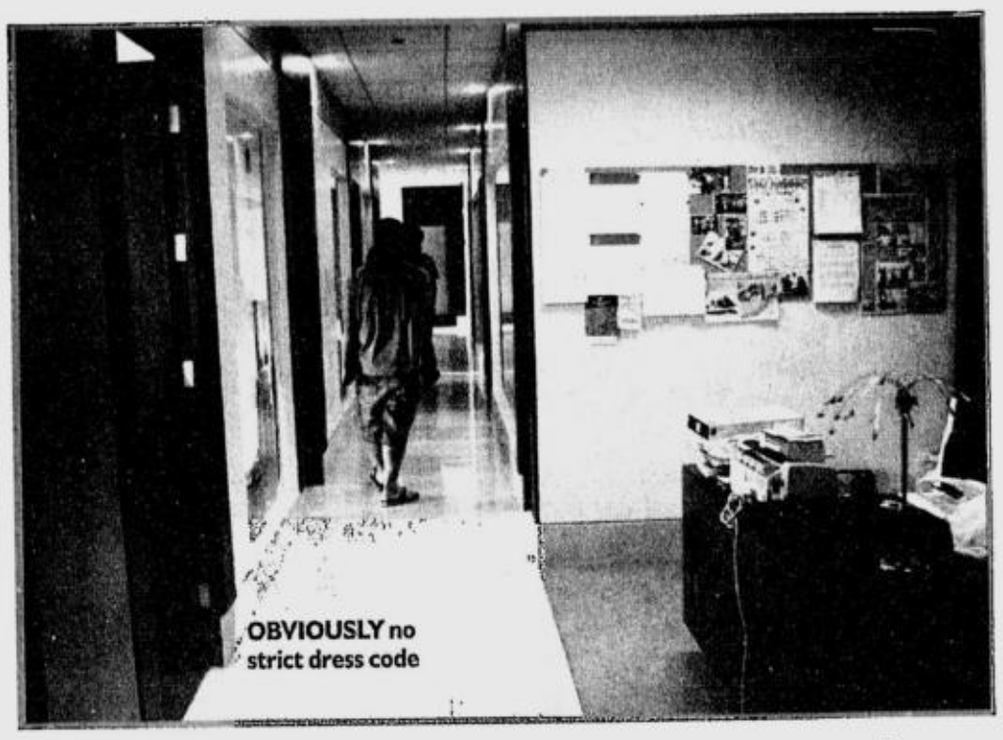
Chief of Correspondents Pam Pastor

sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph



Small school, special learning

The One School is the only institution in the country that has adapted an educational philosophy called the Harkness Method

PLAYING guitar hero

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Alanah Torralba

ON MY LAST YEAR OF HIGH school, while preparing to go to college, I already knew what career I wanted to have and what course I wanted to take up. What I wasn't particularly sure of was the school I should enroll in.

I had older friends who were convincing me to go to their own schools. I had high school friends who were similarly confused, but had their minds made up. I had my choices, my pros and cons list, and even did some research. So I ended up at the wrong school (I belatedly realized) and even graduated from there.

Sometimes, I wish I hadn't gone to that school. Sometimes, I wish I went to another school—somewhere with a more personalized education, a more nontraditional institution.

Last week, I visited one such place called The One School.

Set up by business-minded individuals—Francisco and Mary Anne Colayco, Lex and Cheese Ledesma, and Andy and Agnes Ferreira—The One School is the only institution in the country that has adapted an educational philosophy called the Harkness Method.

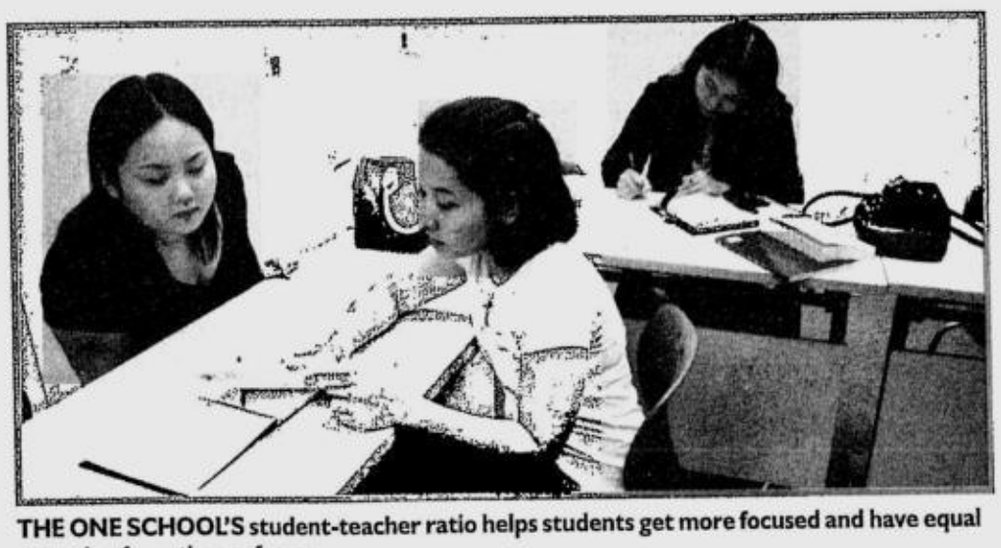
Premised on roundtable, discussion-type instruction, this educational technology was chosen by the school because it believes students aren't empty vessels waiting to be filled, but co-facilitators in creating positive growth.

In this school, paper and pencil tests aren't the only measures of success. One-on-one instruction with business and personal mentors are required and self-knowledge is supported.

Special

There are many reasons why The One School is nontraditional—and perhaps special.

SMALL/ C3



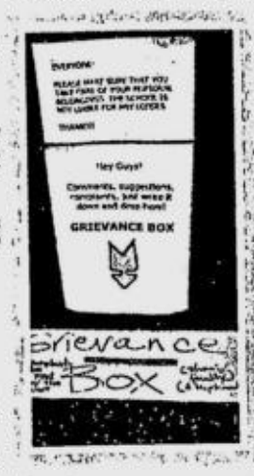
THE ONE SCHOOL'S student-teacher ratio helps students get more focused and have equal attention from the professor.

2bU! school raid:

The One School edition

This year is going to be an even more exciting one for 2bU! We've decided to carry out school raids and into our what's going on in different campuses around the country. Our first stop is the One School, a nontraditional school in Bobcat Plaza that is changing the way students learn.

We sat in on their classes, chatted with the students,



spoke to the teachers and found out a lot about them and their home outside their home.

We walked away wishing we could study there during our coming school year.

You want to visit your school e-mail address: 2bU@inquirer.com.ph and tell us why it makes your campus really special.

GARFIELD

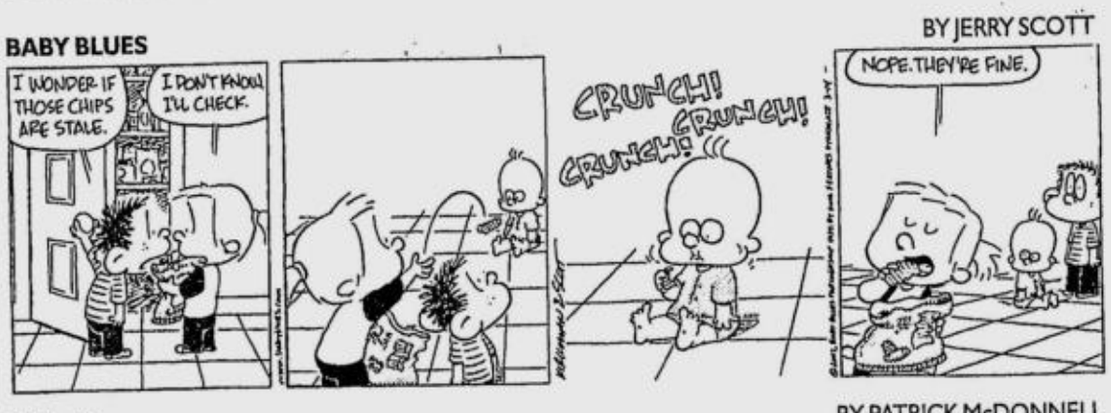
BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

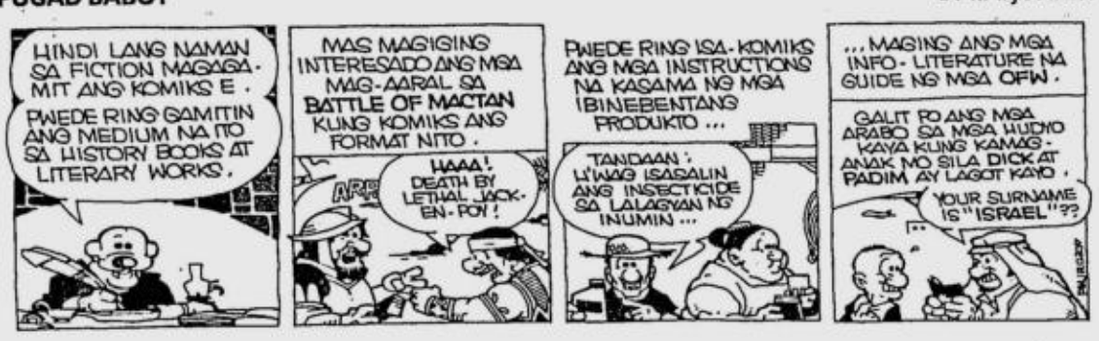
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT



PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR



MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL

LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA

MIKROKOSMOS

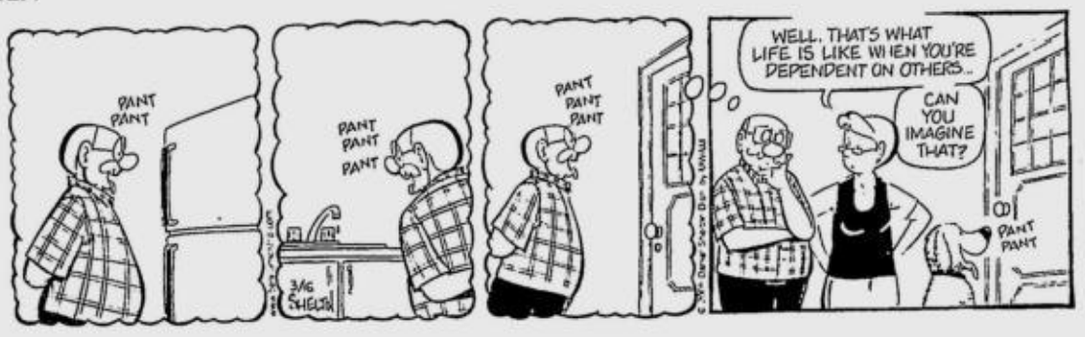
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

TULDOK

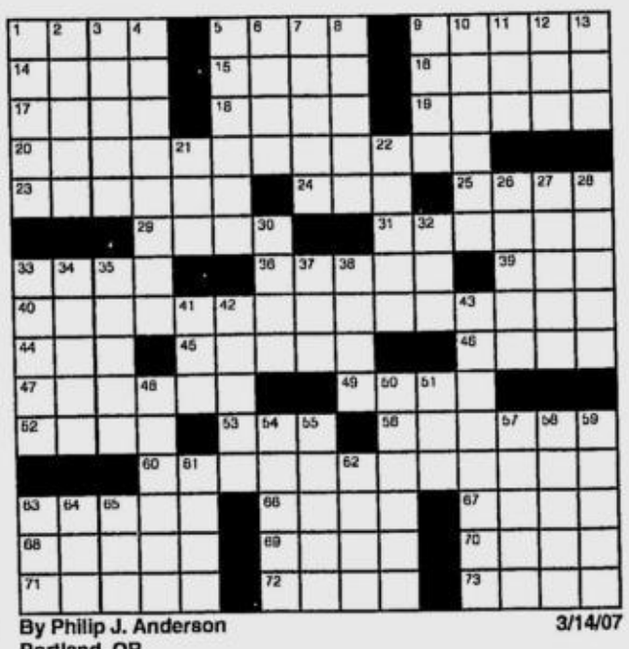
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON



DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

3/14/07

ACROSS
1 Hold back
5 Offside indicator
9 Dodge
14 Legal scholar Guinier
15 Poor, as excuses go
16 Martinique volcano
17 EPA concern
18 "__ Brockovich"
19 Big name in chips
20 Eric with Debra on TV
23 Tarnishes
24 Above, to poets
25 Mr. Knievel
29 __-do-well
31 Small boat facility
33 1975 Wimbledon champion
36 Zodiac ram
39 Posed
40 Paul with David on TV
44 __ favor
45 Modify
46 Hoopster Archibald
47 Graceful grazer
49 German head waiter
52 Pop vocalist Elliot
53 Brit. flyboys
56 Coral creations
60 Susan with Jane on TV
63 __ provocateur
66 Smelting residue
67 Fancy fringe
68 Track of a wild animal
69 Funnies pooch
70 Author Bagnold
71 Noodles in Roma
72 D.C. old-timers
73 Internet periods

DOWN
1 Oodles
2 Unspoken
3 "__ Gay"
4 Hat designer
5 Harvest blubber
6 Rendered fat
7 Mexican pal
8 Art grouping
9 Heroic tale
10 Plywood layer
11 Carol of "Private Parts"
12 Ruby or Sandra
13 Lamprey
21 Organic suffix
22 Ready for detonation
26 Pleasing view
27 Make into law
28 Wood shaping machine
30 Zany Martha
32 Silvery gray
33 Meat jelly
34 Botanical pore
35 Strings for angels?
37 Sought office
38 Chinese leader?
41 Actor Mineo
42 Giant retailer
43 Opened, like a scroll
48 Start of JFK's command
50 Emblems
51 LAX posting
54 Man of fables
55 Nick of the PGA
57 Argentine plain
58 Within the law
59 Burpee buy
61 Gillette shaver
62 Brad or spike
63 Nile viper
64 Coll. student's rating
65 Dawn goddess

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

P	E	S	T		S	A	L	T	S		S	P	A	T
A	C	H	E		P	L	E	A	T		L	U	B	E
S	H	O	E		A	P	A	C	E		O	R	E	S
T	O	O	M	U	C	H	F	O	R	W	O	R	D	S
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S	I	L	E	N	C	E	I	S	G	O	L	D	E	N
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H	O	P	E		S	E	E	D	Y		S	N	A	P

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3/14/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a sweet, affectionate nature. You're also very realistic and accepting of what is. Nevertheless, you're an independent thinker; you draw your own conclusions about things. If something fascinates you, you will pursue it relentlessly. The year ahead might be one of the best years of your life. You have the power to do things. Expect a miracle!
Birthdate of: Michael Caine, actor; Albert Einstein, mathematician/physicist; Billy Crystal, actor/comedian.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is an excellent day to socialize with others. You feel friendly and ready to operate with friends and groups. Others are drawn to your positive energy.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Although this is quite a social time for you, you can get a lot done by working alone today. This is a good time to contact government agencies or large institutions.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Any kind of group activity will please you today. Group settings, business conferences, organizational meetings and the like will go extremely well. (Ditto for romance and friendship.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): No matter what you do for a living, today you might be asked to help out with design, layout work or office decorating, or with making something look more attractive. (Just do what you can.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Do something different today! You're very eager to learn something new or explore the world in a new way. Try to visit someplace you've never been before.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is an excellent day to try to divide things with others. You will be fair, but you will also protect your own self-interests. (And others will be good to you today.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Partnerships, signing contracts or entering into new agreements with others will go well today. You are quick to see how to make things fair and appealing to both parties.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): A co-worker will be grateful for your help today. In turn, you might get praise or even a raise from your boss. People like your style!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Accept party invitations or any other social opportunity that comes your way. You're in the mood for a good time. Romance and love affairs are also blessed today.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Purchases to make where you live look more attractive will please you today. Similarly, you might buy a little gift for a family member.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is a wonderful day to sign contracts or enter into agreements with others. Conversations with siblings and relatives will go well. You are definitely in your element!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Trust your moneymaking ideas today. If you're spending money, you will want to buy beautiful things for yourself and loved ones.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

		9	6					
	6		7					
2				1				8
1	7	6			9	5	3	
		8						6
		2						1
		7	1	5	2	9	8	3
		1		9		6		7
		3		6		1		4

Difficulty Level ★★★

3/14

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

9	4	5	3	2	7	6	8	1
7	1	8	4	5	6	9	2	3
2	3	6	8	1	9	5	7	4
8	6	2	9	4	3	7	1	5
3	5	9	1	7	8	4	6	2
4	7	1	5	6	2	8	3	9
1	2	4	7	8	5	3	9	6
6	8	3	2	9	4	1	5	7
5	9	7	6	3	1	2	4	8

Difficulty Level ★★

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Learning business by doing business

By Camill Vazquez
2bU! Contributor

I NEVER EXPECTED TO FIND myself in a business school. Previously, I had always imagined myself in an art school, learning about art and design theory, experimenting with different kinds of media, and generally making pretty pictures. Instead, I am here at The One School (TOS) and if you ask me, I'm glad to be nowhere else.

For those who are unfamiliar with who we are, The One School is an entrepreneurship school based in Makati, the heart of the Philippine business and finance world. As a school, we stand out from the rest for many different reasons.

Currently, there are only about 30 students at The One School. This fact is startling, I know. We like it that our class size is small. Small classes mean that we work and learn faster. Also, because there are fewer students to teach, learning becomes individualized. Should you have a problem, both the teachers and the school staff are very easy to approach and talk to.

Our small population also gives the school a fun, friendly, familiar atmosphere. We are given the chance to really get to know each other. After-school events such as cookouts, hangouts and parties are not uncommon.

Some students come to school even when they don't have any class! Personally, I can honestly say that I've already made some very good life-long friends and connections during my stay in this school.

A popular misconception is that because we are much smaller than your conventional colleges and universities, we aren't exposed to the same variety of personalities. No one at The One School has the same personality. We're all so different. We've got martial artists, gamers, golfers, artists, fashionistas and DJs—just to name a few. We come from all sorts of places: Alabang, New Manila and Bulacan among others. I'd like to think that The One School is simply a mini-representation of the bigger colleges and universities.

Education at The One School is application-based. Everything we learn or take up in class is applied almost automatically. In fact, the work we do in class becomes the foundation for our own future businesses. We learn through experience, which I believe is much better than merely memorizing words and techniques from a book.

Pitches

A perfect example of our application-based education would be our pitches. Instead of having final exams, TOS students are required to apply all their lessons from all their current subjects for the term into creating a pitch presentation of their business ideas. This pitch will be presented to a panel of teachers and guest judges who will analyze and critique the business idea, as well as give valuable comments and suggestions on how to improve the idea.

We're trained to think entrepreneurially—to look for and create opportunities, to strategize—because we are given and put in situations wherein such thinking is necessary.

One thing that I love about school is the fact that we are very democratic. There is a transparency that exists between the administration and the students. Students are informed and consulted when there are matters that affect the school.

Everybody is given the chance to voice out one's opinions. Everyone has the chance to propose a solution. We work together as a community to make the school a better one. I've noticed that because we are given authority, everybody matures and grows to accept responsibility.

The best thing, however, about The One School, is the fact that it's all about the students. We're not forced to fit into a particular mold but rather, we're made to focus on developing what we're naturally good at. We're encouraged to use our strengths to turn our passions into businesses. It's often that you hear the students tell each other: "What's the point of doing it if you don't like it or love it at all?"

That is why we are all here. The only thing we want to do is what we love doing, be it golf, DJ-ing, makeup or art. The One School has given us that opportunity. Even though I'm not where I imagined I would be several years ago, I'm glad that I ended up here. Just because I'm not at an art school doesn't mean I can't make art or I can't turn that into a business.

IN THIS class, your teacher and your peers hang on to every word you say.

Here's an English class where you're taught more than just grammar

English for future taipans

By Gmeleen Faye B. Tomboc
2bu! Correspondent

WELCOME TO THE ONE SCHOOL, where going to your classes doesn't feel like, well, going to your classes.

I was asked to sit in on the Effective Business Communications session, and I walked away learning more than just grammar.

Passing through The One School's gleaming glass doors, I imagined that classes here would be formal and stiff. School staff members Tracey Gonzales and Jo-ann Espino showed me around the sleek silver interiors of the school. I was surprised that the classrooms were so tiny, until Tracey told me they only had 25 students and 17 faculty members for the entire school. As students streamed in, they greeted the staff members like old friends.

In a while, I was ushered into what looked like the "biggest" classroom. I immediately noticed that the tables and chairs were in a U-shape formation, and not the usual setup where the teacher stood in front facing rows of students, lecture-hall style.

AMIR Zanjani shares how he will build a trust fund for his kids.

My eyes quickly fell on the "Cashflow" board game in "Rich Dad, Poor Dad," lying on top of one table. This was, after all, a school for entrepreneurs. There were only eight students, all freshmen.

Cherie Altea, the teacher for the class, started explaining the activity for the day. Every student had to give a three- or five-minute speech on what he would do if given a million dollars.

Without any prodding from Cherie, Juancho Ongkeko, one of the students, plopped down on the seat next to mine. Turning to me, he explained that in their class, they are taught to speak with confidence and eloquence. Miguel Lazaro, his classmate, then started showing me videos of their last speaking exercise. Cherie explained that they taped every class so students could track their own performances.

In a while, Cherie asked her students to give their speeches. I heard plans to donate to charity, go on a trip around the world and even start a business in Iraq. One even elaborated on his dream wedding. And of course, there were plans to invest in mutual funds, buy real property to rent out or start their own businesses.

One student, Mark San Diego, earnestly shared plans to open trendy bars in Manila and New York. I was amazed that this teenager had already done his math: Opening a small bar in the Big Apple would cost him P20 million.

In between speeches, the students were asked to comment on their classmates' performances. Whenever someone remarked that a speech was good, Cherie insisted that he "operationalize" his observation and state exactly why the speech was good.

Someone would insert a wisecrack here and there, and the whole class would double over in laughter. It felt more like hanging out with friends than attending a class, which was good because the students spoke more freely and assertively.

Later on, after the students had filed out of the classroom, Cherie clarified that she does give lectures. However, the bulk of her classes consist of practical exercises. For instance, she doesn't give the usual multiple-choice questions on things like subject-verb agreement. Rather, she asks them to submit written works, and she corrects their grammar right then and there.

Or, as she did for that day, she gives a topic and asks them to speak in front of the class. "I've noticed that after a few sessions, their speeches have less "Uhms" and "Ahs," and are more structured. I'm impressed that my students have clear goals, and are creative, practical and enterprising," she said.

Later, over iced tea and peanut-butter cakes at Grub Club, Tracey and Jo-ann marveled at how there were no cliques among the students. Through the years, their wards have bloomed from wallflowers to self-assured individuals.

In a while, executive director Lex Ledesma arrived and chatted with some students. This is a school where mentors eat burgers and trade barbs with their apprentices, as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

But then again, it's not called "The One School" for nothing. Now, every time I pass by the RCBC Plaza, I can't help but look up. Somewhere high up in that massive gray structure, there's a student with a gleam in his eye, talking animatedly about what could be the next big thing.

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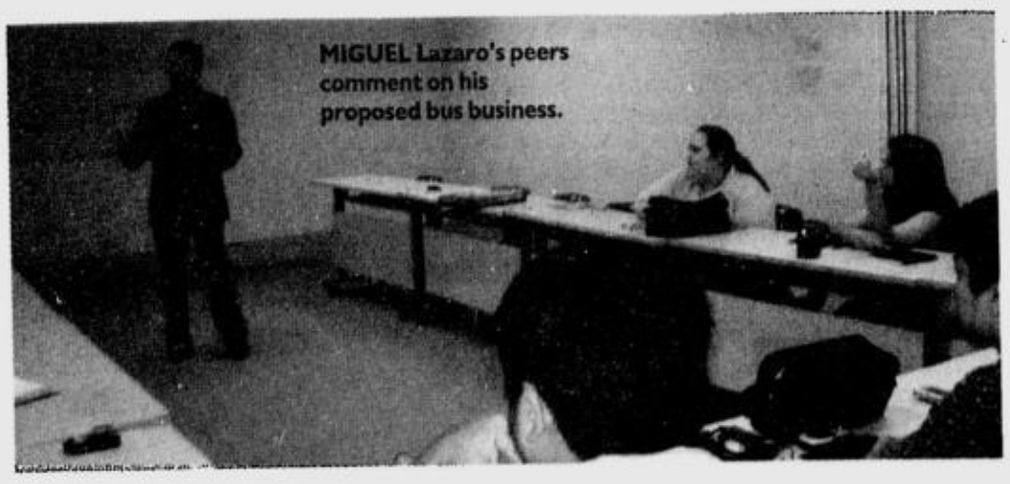
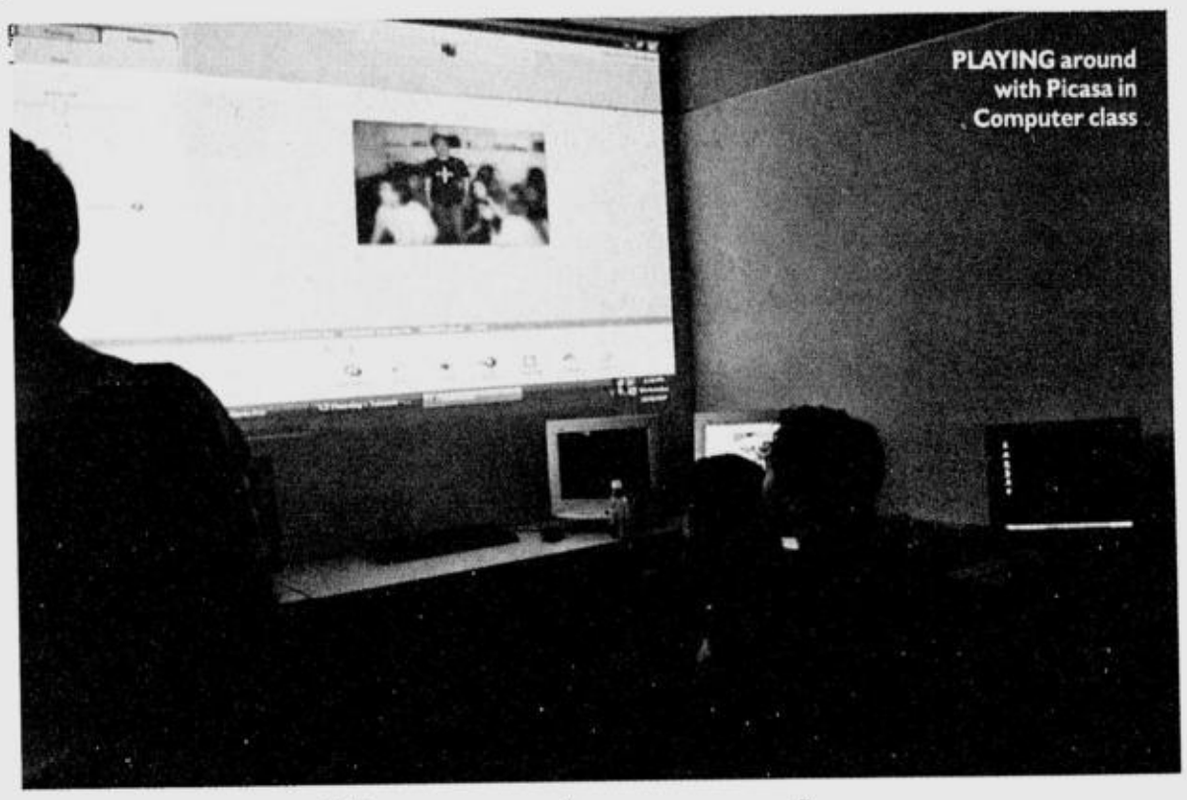


MIGUEL Lazaro's peers comment on his proposed bus business.



PLAYING around with Picasa in Computer class

Small school...

From page C1

Having small classes is one. At present, the ratio is 12 students per class. What happens when the student population grows? The school plans to hire more teachers so that its ideal teacher-student ratio can be maintained.

One School's primary requirement for teachers is the ability to effectively communicate with young people, assuming of course they already have the basic teaching credentials. The school owners believe that every single subject is interesting, and can be made even more interesting by effective teachers.

"What makes school such a drag are boring, uninspired, put-me-upon-a-pedestal-type teachers," says Lex Ledesma, the executive director. "We avoid these kinds of people like the plague."

According to academic director Dax Cobarrubias, the most effective instructors they have in school are the ones the students look up to and aspire to be.

"We get people who, by the age of 30, are doing things they love doing and have experienced events and traveled places that people would have never thought of," he says.

"Our teachers are not just dreamers, but they put down their goals on paper and stretch themselves to achieve them. They have successful lives outside school and teaching our classes is their way of giving back and making sure that they can make other lives, aside from themselves, work."

The One School has one other thing going for it: It makes learning fun.

I sat in during the Mandarin class one time and witnessed just how much fun everyone was having. The students were generous with jokes while eating their lollipops. The teacher, who was addressed on a first-name basis, was animated. Despite all the fun, it was clear how the pupils were in a healthy environment that promoted learning in an enjoyable way.

But while the school is different in some ways, it is also traditional in certain aspects.

For example, all the traditional basic subjects are there. While the school celebrates the innate uniqueness of each student, it also make sure that the students that are accepted into the system are those who are totally committed to learning and growth, and not those who think they can just bum around and still graduate.

SIR what? Lex Ledesma hangs out with the One School students.

STUDENTS play "Munchkin" in boardroom-looking classroom

COUNT on this guy to uplift Martial Arts in the country.

This business school—which offers a Bachelors Degree in Entrepreneurship plus a Masters Degree in Public Administration, Major in Social Entrepreneurship, in 11 trimesters—is perfect for ambitious dreamers who want to study in a small-classroom environment where the teacher is more of a facilitator than the terror or boring type.

Promotion

Of course, promoting a nontraditional school can prove to be challenging and difficult.

"Pinoys are not very open yet to exploring other options when it comes to education," says Jo-Ann Vidal-Espino, planning and development head of school. "As Pinoys, we're very traditional and concerned with branding, and with that mindset comes the idea that we have to send our kids to the popular and traditional schools—not to put other schools down, of course, as we really believe, too, that you should go where you fit in and where you think you'll be happy."

For Tracey Gonzales, head of external affairs, changing the mindset of people about nontraditional schools is the most challenging part of her marketing job.

"A lot of misconceptions have already been associated with our positioning," says Gonzales. "Some think we just accept everybody and that one can easily pass subjects with minimum effort. But we have a lot of activities where we invite outsiders to sit in and experience our nontraditional environment, because that's the only way they will really feel the difference."

The school is also very new and virtually unknown, so the staff have to double their efforts to make their presence known and eventually get more students.

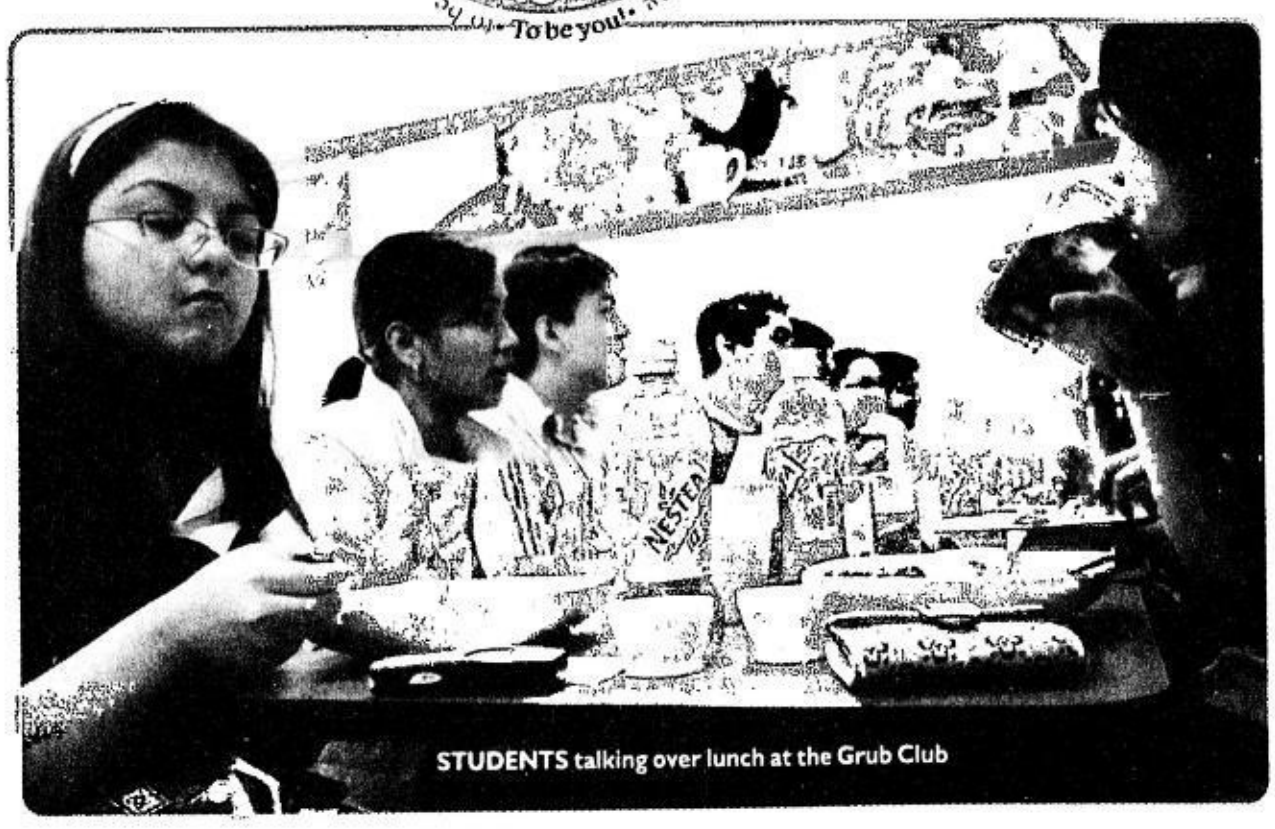
Still, according to Espino, more and more parents and students are demanding personalized education and small-size classes—two things that the school offers, apart from other attractive features, of course.

The One School is transferring to a much bigger place this June. All signs seem to show that the school is headed in the right direction.

The One School is on the 28/F of the Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Ave., Makati. Call 8872828, fax 7532828 or visit www.theoneschool.org.

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com.

The Grub Club may look like your usual cafeteria, but the food definitely doesn't taste like your usual cafeteria blah food


STUDENTS talking over lunch at the Grub Club

A HEARTY salad

Grub club

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Alanah Torralba

THERE IS NO DOUBT HOW MUCH THE food gods love the students from The One School. Just look at where their school is located: the RCBC Plaza, which houses an assortment of restos, fastfood chains, eateries and coffee shops.

Lunchtime already? There's Tapa King, Pasta Works and Mongolian Quick Stop. Snack time? There's 7 Eleven. Sleepy or too much vacant time? There's Starbucks!

There's one food place, however, where most of students from The One School regularly frequent: Grub Club.

The Grub Club may look like your usual cafeteria, but the food definitely doesn't taste like your usual cafeteria blah food, as I found out for myself one lunch hour with the students.

I started my meal with a hearty salad composed of greens, croutons and the best tasting grilled tofu I've ever tasted. When I go back—trust me, I will—I will definitely ask for another plate of that with extra tofu.

After that, I got myself a plate of Buffalo Chicken Fillet which took me quite a while to finish since the serving size was really huge. The chicken fillet is bigger than the cup of flavored rice that it comes with. The sauce is sweet and spicy, plus there's some blue cheese, too, which makes the dish taste really interesting and unique.

For dessert, the Grub Club has a great selection of cakes, from the carrot kind to the moist chocolate type. I opted for a vanilla nutty slice which reminded me of tiramisu.

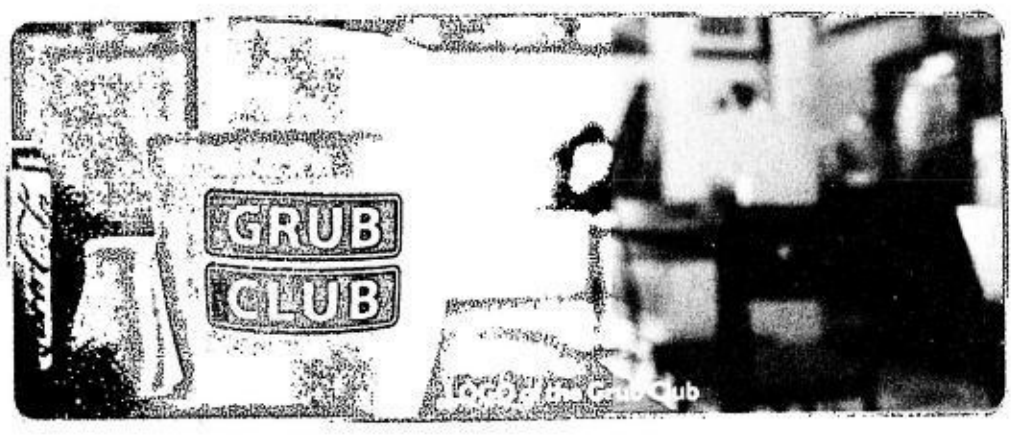
BUFFALO wings with blue cheese sauce

The food place's bestsellers include the Buffalo Chicken Panini, a sandwich that student Hadeel suggested I take out, and the Buffalo Chicken Fillet that I tried. Other dishes you might want to try out are the Beef Salpicao and the Sticky Beef Ribs.

Of course, the food is not the only thing that makes the Grub Club special. The place is a big hit among the building tenants because of its friendly service, food presentation, nice owners and the fact that you can order through text.

"You don't even have to leave your seat," says Camill.

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com



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TASHA Rodriguez discusses night shift differentials in Salaries and Wages class

Oil of opportunity

Tasha Rodriguez's VitaOils is achieving success one bottle at a time

By Tammy David
2bU! Correspondent

WHEN IT COMES TO uplifting the economy, it's best to count on risk-takers who choose to stay in the country and provide jobs to others as a result of their entrepreneurial spirit.

And what a refreshing sight it is to see that a number of our new entrepreneurs are still in school (translation: they're young).

One of them is 22-year-old Natasha "Tasha" Marie C. Rodriguez, who says, "As a kid, I always wanted to be a successful businesswoman who makes a difference in the world."

Like most entrepreneurs, she started early. In elementary school, she sold schoolbag must-haves like imported pens and stickers to her classmates. One summer, she even sold ice candy with fruit to construction workers.working beside her grandmother's house in Dasmariñas Village, Makati.

Business vision

Tasha is currently a senior at The One School, and a candidate for BSBA Major in Entrepreneurship.

When her course required her to come up with an entrepreneurial venture, she thought of three objectives: "It should be somewhat related to my father's organic farming enterprise, it should be something I am passionate about, and it should have an altruistic angle."

Luckily, when she talked with her mom about about her business plans, Rodriguez was introduced to a nun from Negros Occidental. The nun made healing oils to provide the less fortunate an alternative to over-the-counter medicine.

Such charitable work resulted in the production of mulberry, now one of the main ingredients of Rodriguez's flagship product, the Mulberry Healing Oil.

Thus was Tasha's VitaOils born—a line of healing organic herbal oils infused with Mulberry which relaxes, soothes, restores, and balances the mind and body.

With an initial capital of P10,000, Rodriguez sold her first batch of products in the Sunday organic market of Legaspi Village, Makati. Referrals from friends who received the healing oils as gifts also helped Rodriguez gain new clients.

She credits The One School's "non-traditional method of teaching" for enabling her "to learn and absorb the lessons in class and apply it to my business and real life endeavors."

But like all entrepreneurs, Rodriguez found it wasn't an easy road. A lot of people tried to put her down by rejecting her product and criticizing her, since they did not believe she could make it.

"But I always felt that I can do this, and by my hard work and perseverance VitaOils is finally picking up," she says.

Rodriguez's plans for VitaOils include having her own store and eventually supplying organic healing massage to spas, wellness centers and beauty shops here and abroad.

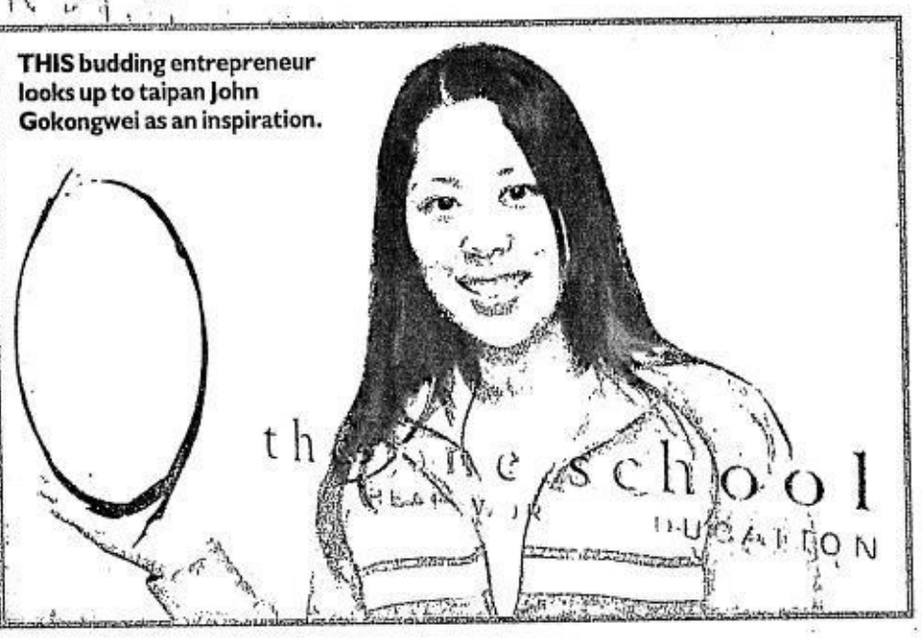
She looks up to John Gokongwei as an example, admiring the taipan for supporting his family at an early age and becoming an philanthropist.

Her advice to aspiring entrepreneurs? Dare to be different, know when to take risks and find opportunities at every crisis. For this, she quotes Gokongwei's words. "Choose to be entrepreneur because then you create value. Choose to be an entrepreneur because the products, services, and jobs you create then become the lifeblood of our nation. But most of all, choose to be an entrepreneur because then you desire a life of adventure, endless challenge, and the opportunity to be your best self."

E-mail tammydavid@gmail.com

PRESENTING her Mulberry Healing Oil

THIS budding entrepreneur looks up to taipan John Gokongwei as an inspiration.



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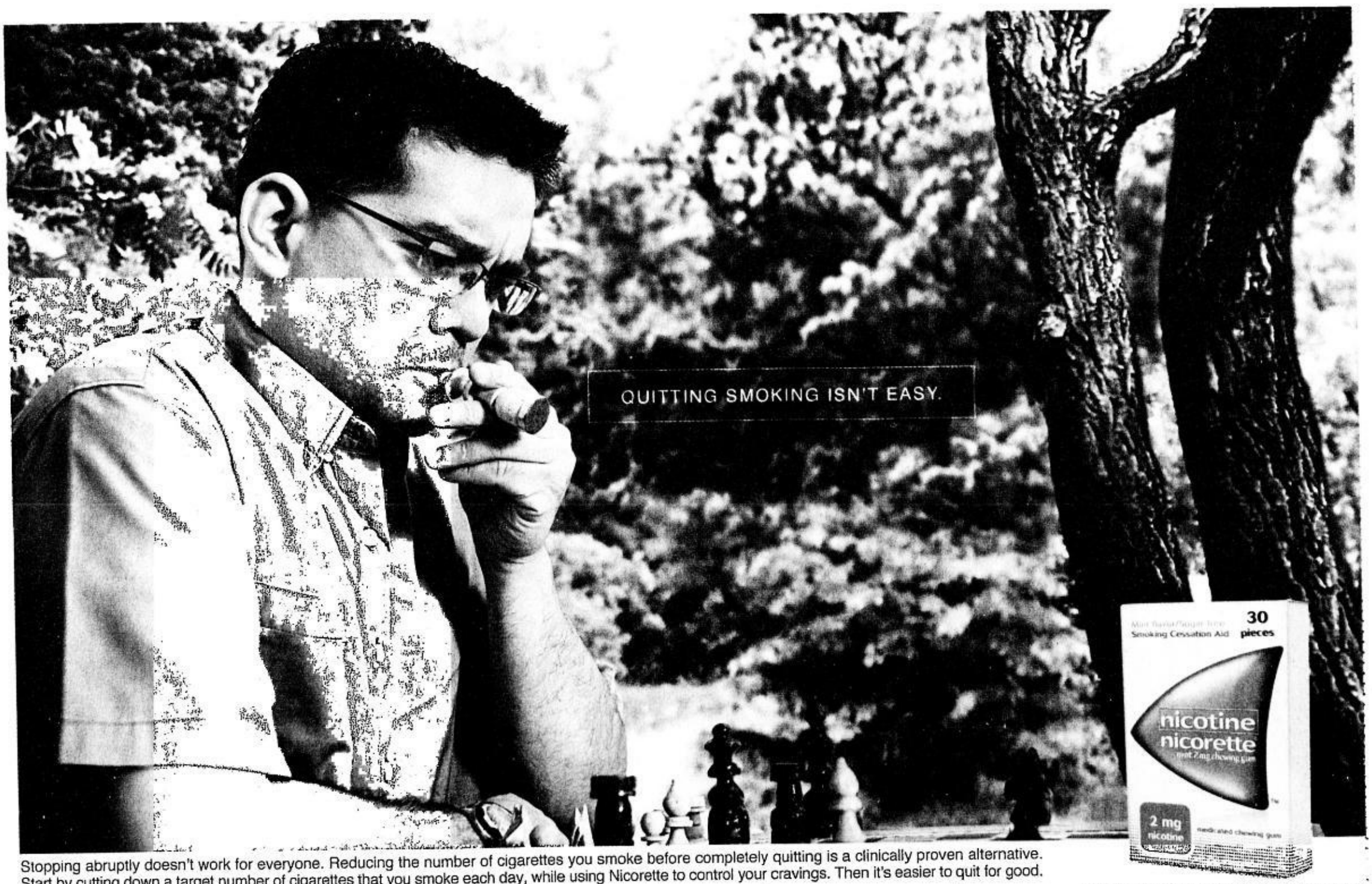

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CHRISTINE Choa-Chuy

MARK San Diego

JASMIN Sumaylo

RYAN Hao

THERESA Cho

CHASE Ocier-Hui

Snooping on the students

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Alanah Torralba

STUDENTS FROM THE ONE SCHOOL are a like-minded lot: They enjoy video games, food from Grub Club, and playing cards, getting in a few hours of arnis, or just hanging out and talking after classes. They all want to be successful business owners, too.

But aside from that, what are the students of The One School really like? We hung out one day at the school and got to talk to some of the students. Read on to see what their passions are, what they like doing in their free time, and why they love their school so much.

"I teach arnis in my village and in the school, but I also play a lot of video games. It was a video game that got me interested in arnis." —**Ryan Hao, 19**

"I do vector work and cartoons." —**Camill Vasquez, 19**

"When they first started computer classes here, I always got exempted. I'm sort of a part-time technician here. I install games, maintain the computers—if anything messes up, I take care of it." —**Chase Ocier-Hui, 22**

"I love food and video games, so I'm thinking of going into businesses related to those. I want new movie food to be my product—good sandwiches and burgers near movie houses. I'm also into taekwondo." —**Fab Salas, 24**

"I'm helping my fiancé with his resort in Anilao, Batangas. I'm getting married this year, so I'm taking cooking lessons from a Korean lady after school." —**Theresa Cho, 24**

"Business has fueled my passion." —**José Rodriguez, 19**

"I love studying. The school has really helped me reach my passion. My passion is money." —**Amir Zanjani, 19**

"I'm interested in social entrepreneurship and making a difference in the Filipino people. I'm looking to empower people; I don't know how just yet, but I'm willing to find out." —**Miguel Lazaro, 27**

"We are given a very constructive education. We're like-minded; we all have different businesses, but we have a common goal: to succeed in the business world." —**Juancho Ongkeko, 19**

"I'm an artist, and the school helps me promote what I like to do while earning from it at the same time." —**Hadeel Abdul, 16**

"What really drives me is my passion about the things I love—clothes and photography. I make designs for shirts, I call them Man on the Moon." —**Mark San Diego, 19**

"I've learned to love school more because I'm not forced to do things I don't want to do. The instruction leads me to really do what I want, and to take the right steps." —**Michelle Laumonde, 18**

"I love dancing. Before, I joined cheerleading and dance club competitions. I also love volleyball and tennis." —**Jasmin Sumaylo, 17**

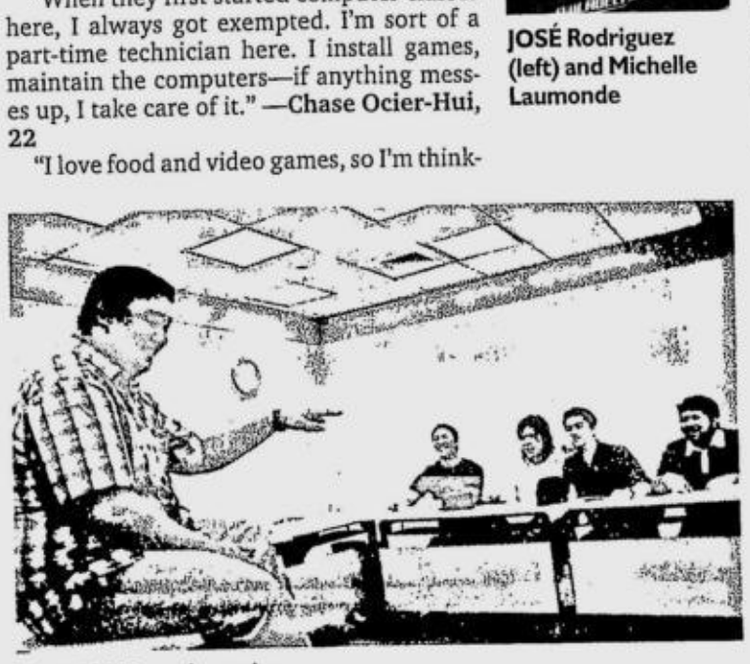
"I collect vintage cameras! I'm really into photography, and I love food, too. All of us in the school love food." —**Christine Choa-Chuy, 26**

CAMILL Vasquez

MIGUEL Lazaro

JOSÉ Rodriguez (left) and Michelle Laumonde

STUDENTS from The One School hang out together, regardless of age or batch.


INFORMAL study session

SALAS on the X-box with teacher Andy Huang (above), and playing cards with Vasquez

What makes your school cool?

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Alanah Torralba

INQUIRER 2BU! ASKED STUDENTS OF The One School what they love most about their school, and while their answers were mostly similar, what they thought made their school cool was totally different from what made other schools great.

"I love the fact that the school lets you pursue things that you love to do and at the end of it all, guides and mentors students to turn their passion into a business." —**Chase Ocier-Hui, 22**

"It teaches me how to turn my hobby into my business." —**Hadeel Abdul, 16**

"The One School has a nontraditional approach to teaching. It enforces the integration of subjects that can be applied to our businesses and in real-life situations. Its goal is to breed successful social entrepreneurs who are driven, passionate and want to make a difference in the world." —**Natasha Rodriguez, 22**

"It's not traditional, the name really stands for itself. And it really is the best school for entrepreneurship. I can honestly say there is no other school than The One." —**Mark San Diego, 19**

"The best thing about The One School is the educational system, the mentoring." —**Jasmin Sumaylo, 17**

"It's a nontraditional school that lets you work at your own pace and prioritize putting up your own business. In the end, you finish your studies and establish a business." —**Patrick San Diego, 18**

"The best thing about The One School is how it focuses on who we are individually, what we can do and what we love." —**Camill Vasquez, 19**

"The culture. No one in the school is average. Like a combined force of superheroes, all share their powers in an ethical and helpful environment so that each can achieve his goal of being first in the business world." —**Amir Zanjani, 19**

"It's being surrounded by corporate culture but still having a feel of family that is shared with every person in the school. We have a culture that is very distinct from anywhere I have been. When I say culture, I mean collective behavior. We are all very dissimilar yet find a common ground in our education. That is our culture." —**José Rodriguez, 19**

"The school focuses on the growth of individuality and of leadership qualities of the students. It enhances the student's PR by bimonthly pitch presentation, which is our main exam. Also, the class is like a conference. Students get more from the nontraditional way of teaching, and we can express freely our thoughts and ideas. Also, since we are few, the professors can really focus on every student in class. Students help each other out to improve one another. We are not competing with each other, but rather pulling each up to be better." —**Stephanie Robles, 17**

"The best thing about The One School is that the line between teachers, mentors and students are blurred, which creates a more interactive space for the students to learn without the intimidation or fear of punishment, embarrassment or failure. The bonds of friendship promote a more encouraging environment which isn't exactly popular in Filipino society. However, this doesn't mean that we are all complete chums or buds. Respect in this school, whether teacher, staff or student, is earned. Another nice thing about TOS is that we students are given enough elbow room to find our own discipline. Personal and business mentoring is also another great thing. We're constantly kept on tab by our business mentors, who are also entrepreneurs, to help our business fly. To balance this off, we have life coaches that keep us intact on a personal level, because running a business at such a young age can be a bit much sometimes." —**Cheers Vazquez, 22**

"My favorite part about The One School is the support the students, faculty and staff have for each other academically, personally and for our businesses." —**Fabrice Salas, 24**

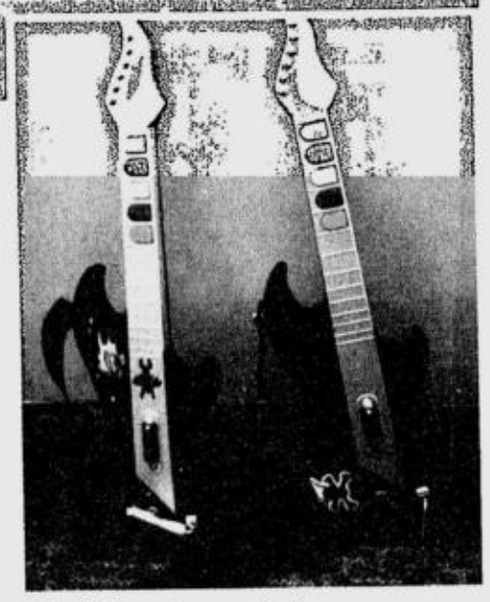
"The best thing about the school is the mentoring I get from the teachers and mentors. They provide clarity to my life and my goals." —**Miguel Lazaro, 27**

"The people. They help you grow to reach your true potential. They also treat you like family." —**Ryan Hao, 19**

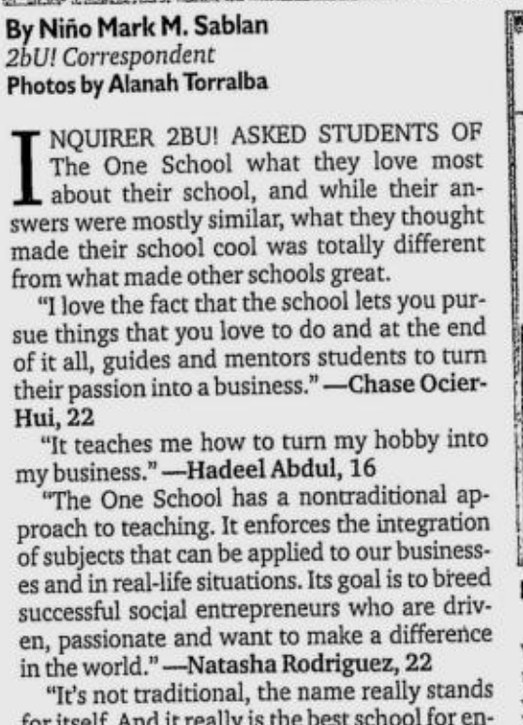
E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com

ROUND-TABLE discussions make it easier for everyone to participate in class.

'The line between mentors and students are blurred, creating a more interactive space'


GUITAR hero for everybody

HIGH-TECH learning process


OFFICE-LIKE appearance of the school doesn't reflect its laid-back atmosphere.

FILE your complaints here.

LEX Ledesma illustrating a point

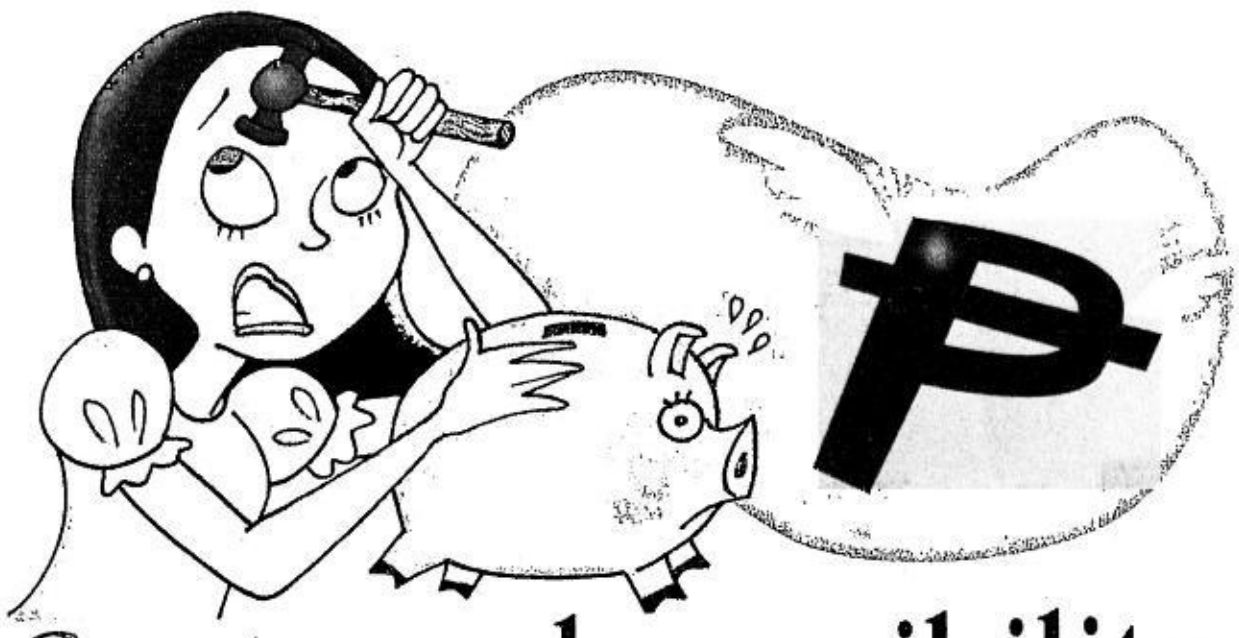


ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Cents and sensibility

Is money affecting your friendships? Here are some good tips to remember

By Angelo Comsti
2bU! Contributor

JEMILY UY, A GUIDance counselor from an exclusive girls' school, lends advice on how to keep money from affecting your relationships.

My friend has a habit of borrowing money and never paying back. How can I amicably deal with this? And what's the best way to ask for my money back without sounding rude?

To end this problem, don't lend any more money. But if your friend insists and takes your refusal against you, you might have to rethink your role in her life: Are you her friend or financier?

As for getting your money back, do it in the least threatening but straightforward way. Instead of demanding for it upfront, remind her of the time you lent her money (in case she just really forgot it). Then ask when she will be able to pay you back. If it's a huge amount, give her an option to pay in installments. Providing her this choice puts her in control of the situation, which makes it less embarrassing for her. When the due date arrives, you won't come off sounding too demanding since you're just reminding her of your friendly agreement.

My *barkada* has been going to expensive restaurants lately and I can't afford it any longer. What should I do?

Tell your friends that your priorities, and how you allocate your money, have changed. I suggest that you research on hole-in-the-wall restaurants that are within your budget and your *barkada* will like. Or organize a girls' night-in. By doing these you show that you really want to spend time with them and you won't let money, or lack thereof, get in the way of your friendship.

My friends want me to open a business with them. Is this a good idea?

Be sure to consider the business and the people involved. Is it the kind of business you would really like to get into? If yes, study its potential for success. If and only if you decide that it is a good venture should you consider investing.

Having friends as partners has its advantages. Remember, however, that it is first and foremost a business and is a serious venture. Can your friends act professionally when the occasion calls for it? Can you withstand disagreements without taking them personally? Do you share the same goals and plans?

If the answer to such issues is yes, then go right ahead! Just be sure to define your roles to help keep the professional relationship from affecting your friendship.

My friend wants to borrow a huge amount of money from me. Saying yes would affect my financial status (although not as dire as his). Out of friendship, should I lend him money?

Before anything else, see if his need is truly valid. Your decision would surely differ if he needed the money to pay for a new phone or for medical expenses. As a friend, we always want to be able to help out, but you must ensure your own well-being first. If it is truly not within your capabilities, say no. But if your funds allow you to go the extra mile for your friend, remember never to lend more than you can.

And to avoid awkward *singilan* moments, you may want to agree on a payment plan or write IOU's and notes.

When settling a restaurant bill, my best friend computes down to the very last centavo and it bothers me.

Friends, even couples, usually end up bickering when it comes to differences in handling money. My best advice is for you to accept your friend for what she is and to get used to her habit. She may simply value her centavos more than you do and there is nothing really wrong with that. Or is there?

If you can't get over it, ask her why she does that. Getting her point of view may help you understand her better. Another option is to divide a bill your own way one time and ask if that seems fair to her. Hopefully, she might change when she sees how much simpler dividing a bill can be.

Since my salary can't cover for my expenses anymore, I'm thinking of leaving my company even if I love my coworkers and it's what I've always dreamed of doing. Am I making the right move?

It's ideal to go after the job you really, really love. However, reality bites, and when it comes to salaries, size really, really matters. Review your expenses and see if you can cut some off to make ends meet. Or talk to your boss about your concerns. If the company considers you an asset, you might be able to work something out, like the promise of a promotion and a raise in the near future. If all else fails, know that when you are more financially stable, you can always go back to the job you want.

Since I earn more than my friends, they always tease me into treating them out. I've been giving in but it's starting to strain my wallet. How can I stop this?

Express your concern and remind them that your salary may be bigger than theirs but, like everyone else, you also have to pay for bills. Tell your friends to just wait until your birthday or your promotion for the next big treat!

My house doesn't compare to the huge houses my friends live in, that's why not once have I ever invited them over. But lately, they've been insisting. I'm embarrassed.

Inviting friends over to your house may be quite intimidating since your home is something personal. But that may also be the very reason why your friends want to see it. It's their way of getting to know you better. In this matter, it's not the size of your house but the warmth of your welcome that they will appreciate more.

My best friend asked me to be a co-maker for his loan. My parents have advised against it. What should I do?

Being a co-maker makes you equally responsible as your friend in paying the loan. Should she run into trouble, the financial institution can demand the payment from you.

Ask why your friend needs a co-maker. Is it just to have a loan approved? Or does she actually need financial help? If you agree to do it, be sure to protect your own interests. Inquire about the details of the loan and how your friend plans to pay for it. If you say no, be honest about your reasons. Let her know that your decision was not driven by a lack of trust but because of personal concerns. Offer any kind of help like organizing her loan application or payment plan.

I always lend my friend money when she's in need. But when I'm the one borrowing from her, she always makes a big deal out of it and insists I pay her back right away. How do I deal with this?

People handle money in different ways. To avoid any tension, you may want to rethink borrowing money from her again. But if the situation forces you to, make sure to clear things up. First, emphasize that you are not obligating her to lend you money. Second, inform her when you intend to pay her back. Agreeing on these issues will hopefully make things less complicated.

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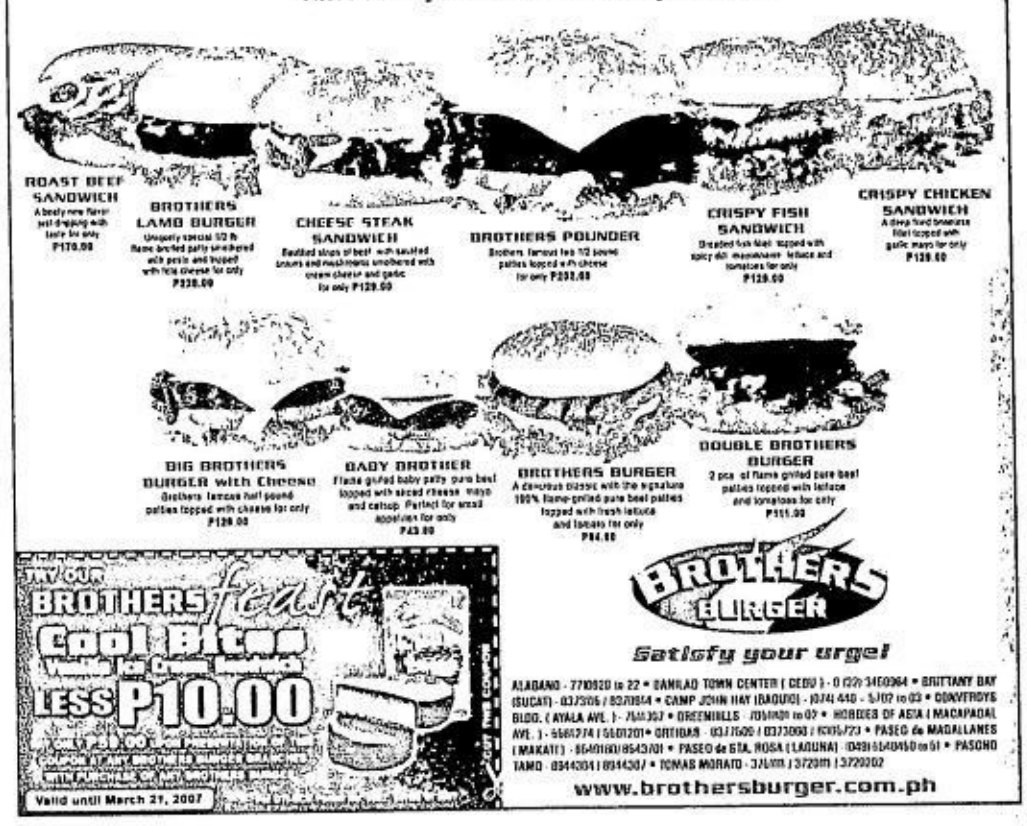
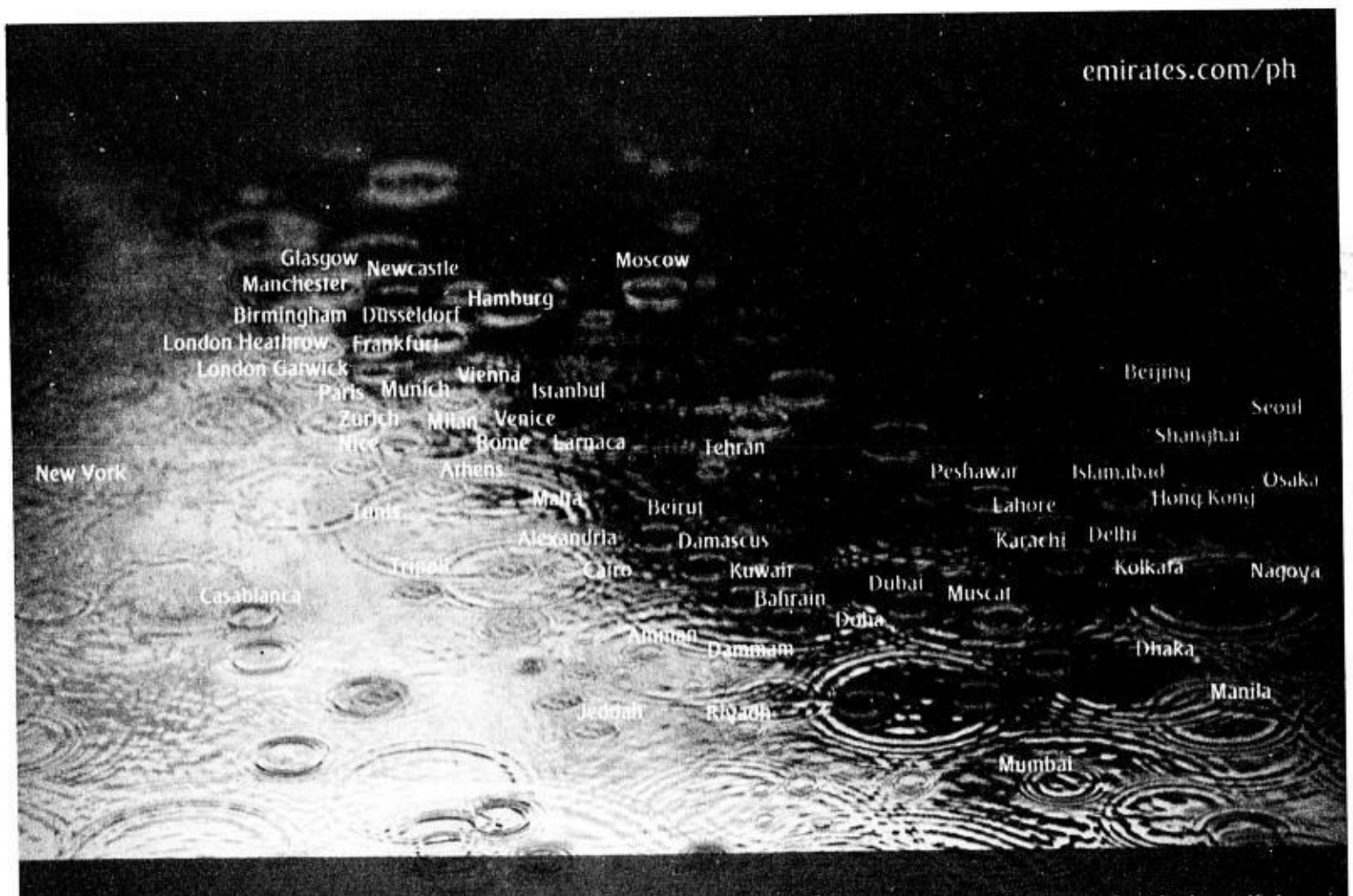




300 International awards. For more details contact your local travel agent or Emirates on tel. (632) 811-5278 or fax (632) 811-5284. Discover frequent flyer benefits at skywards.com.

Star World and 2bU!'s 'American Idol' U B the judge promo

WIN these 'American Idol' CDs!

LIKE MILLIONS OF other fans worldwide, you probably watch "American Idol" and dish out comments like Simon Cowell, Paula Abdul, or Randy Jackson in your very own living room. Well, reserve your very best lines for 2bU! and Star World's American Idol U B the Judge promo!

Every week until the finals, 2bU! readers will get their comments published and win exclusive American Idol premium items and CDs of hot American Idol alums Carrey Underwood, Chris Daughtry, Katharine McPhee and Taylor Hicks from Star World and Sony BMG.

Just e-mail us a critique of your favorite top 12 finalist's performance from tonight's episode. Feel free to comment on anything, whether it's your bet's singing voice, stage presence, attire and make-up, song choice, or audience impact.

Just like our favorite critics from our favorite talent competition, you can be fully supportive, or you can mince no words. And don't forget to tell us who should win American Idol this season.

Send your entry along with a favorite photo of yourself, address, landline and mobile numbers, to starworld.ph @gmail.com. If your critique gets published, call Stratworks at 8937472-73 and look for Cindy Corrales to claim your prizes.

Catch American Idol every Wednesday and Thursday 6 p.m. live via satellite, 8 p.m. primetime, and with an encore at 11:30 p.m.

Innove supports disaster management project

INNOVE'S Aries Sayson with Ronald McDonald

GLOBE/INNOVE ENTERPRISE Business Group Sales head Aries Sayson demonstrates the high-speed wireless Internet connectivity of Globe Visibility to Ronald McDonald during the recent launch of "Share Mo, Time Mo" project at McDonald's, Greenbelt, Makati City. A joint project of the fast food chain, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Innove and IBM Philippines, "Share Mo, Time Mo" aims to help support DSWD's Registry of Volunteers on Disaster Risk Management and Response by creating a national volunteer database that can be mobilized for disaster operations. The project has installed computer laptops provided by IBM and powered by Innove's Internet access in six strategic McDonald's outlets within Metro Manila.

Drops of Life

A HAPPY LIFE IS A LONG LIFE

He who laughs, lasts.* When you're happy you feel healthy. Well, it's more than a feeling. It's true. And a happy life is a healthy life and a longer life.

THE REAL THING

There's no mystery why you drink Coke every time you're happy, or why you want one when you feel a little low. Coke is the quintessential refreshment. It refreshes you. It refreshes how you feel about yourself and how you feel about life. Every time you open a Coke, you get that one-of-a-kind feeling that lifts your spirit and refreshes your body and soul.

A SMILE IN EVERY DRO'

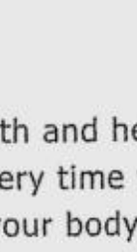
There aren't any studies to prove that drinking Coke will lengthen your life. But we all know that happiness makes you live longer. That's why we put a smile in every Coke you drink and share. So have a Coke and a smile.

We at The Coca-Cola Company think that happiness is like a bottle of Coke. You can't share it with somebody without having some for yourself. That's why you and every one close to you cherish the time-loved taste of Coke, drop by drop. We made Coke to make you smile, and to us every smile counts.

*Mary Pettibone Poole

EVERYONE DESERVES A SMILE

They say that happiness brings better health and helps you live longer. That is why w ɔu a smile in every bottle of Coca-Cola. So every time you open one, you get that one-of- -kind feeling that lifts your spirit and refreshes your body and soul. Nothing compares with ɔke in hand. So sit back, kick off your shoes, grab a Coke and savor life's every drop. Stay happ For more information, log on to www.bawatpatakmahalaga.com.ph.



The Coca-Cola Company
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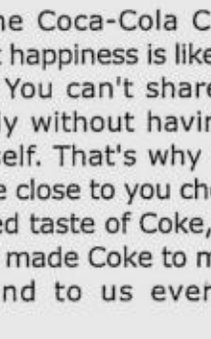

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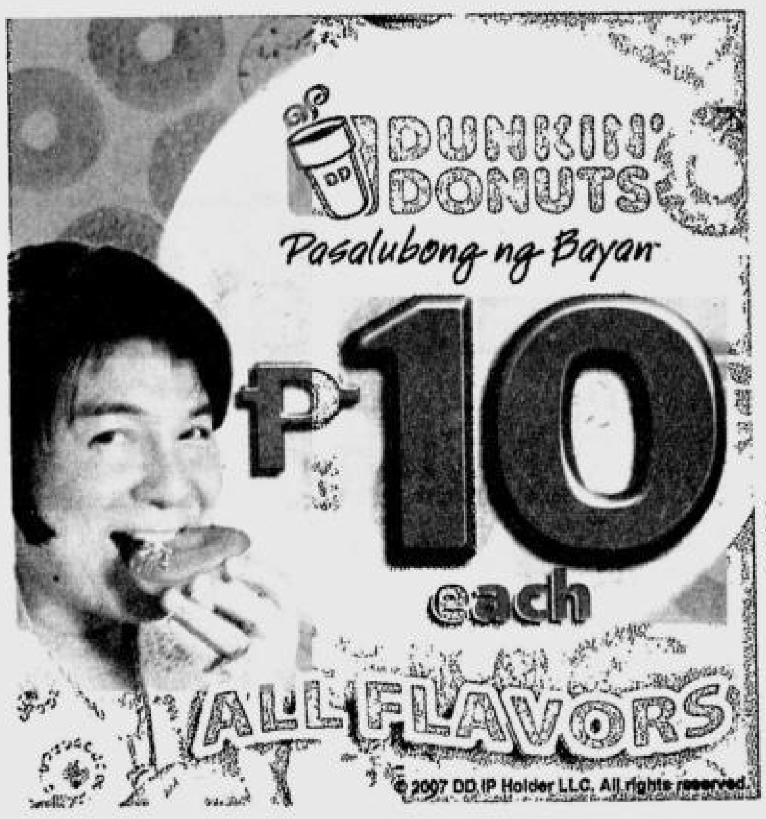
Text us your feedback: Inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

ILLUSTRATION BY LA MISTADES



The vertical challenge

By Herschel Tan

"FACE YOUR DEFICIENCIES and acknowledge them, but do not let them master you," Helen Keller wrote. I heartily agree.

As a kid, I used to think of myself as someone who was considerably good-looking—thin, cute, and especially tall. I took pride in my long legs. I liked being one of the last girls at our line-up ceremonies in school (the order of which were arranged by height). I'd be called upon to be the food monitor in classroom snack times presumably because I was strong. Every time there was a family gathering, my relatives would often remark on how tall I've grown, that soon enough I'd be able to reach them and so forth, and I'd smile and be snugly lost in thoughts of glory. I loved being tall... and please take note of the past tense.

For when I reached the Wicked Stage of Puberty, everything but my height expanded. Dad had this measurement chart which recorded my monthly growth and, save for the initial spurt, I didn't go up an inch for almost four years. Instant karma for laughing at Gloria Arroyo's stature I guess, but then it was also my fair share of guilt since I was such a picky eater and even more picky on exercise.

It was too late to realize I was never going to grow taller anymore. Doctors and science textbooks say that growth development in women peak at the age of 16 years, and I was already way beyond my 15th birthday. As a last-ditch effort, I took those ubiquitous growth pills that barely had an effect on me, except for the fact that I often felt strangely drowsy at night. For the life of me, I couldn't even fathom the number of times I've jumped at strike of 12 every New Year's Day. Mom and I asked my pediatrician if there's anything else that we could do, but she simply laughed.

Believe me, just when fellow girls were blossoming into pretty ladies, here I was, at the prime of my ugly duckling phase. I wanted to shove away all those teenaged pictures of me in various states of shabbiness. I was the short, fat, four-eyed, curly haired, mega-braced monstrosity that could very well make a run for Betty La Fea's money. From being one of the last girls in the line, I became third to the first. And boy did my insecurities wallop. Adolescence proved to be a cruel stage of life, indeed.

I was never going to realize my frustrated dream of becoming a supermodel, with my hobbit-like altitude and lovely lumps of excess baggage. Moreover, my

THE VERTICAL/E3

Be a part of 2bU! and Dove's Self-esteem Chronicles

DOVE RECENTLY LAUNCHED THE Self-esteem Fund, which will be used to run Body Talk Workshops for young girls. In this connection, 2bU! wants to read your self-esteem story.

Share your story. Use the following questions as a guide.

Tell us about your childhood beauty insecurity. How did it develop? Did it make an impact on your self-confidence, your ability to reach your goals and maximize your potential? How did caring for yourself help you overcome your hang-ups? Do you have tips for building a positive self-image?

2bU! and Dove will be running the Self-esteem Chronicles for the next eight weeks, until March 14. One story will be chosen each week. Deadline of entries is every Saturday. Essays must be a maximum of 4,000 characters.

If your story is selected, it will be published in 2bU! and you will receive Dove gift packs and a limited-edition Dove Statement Tee designed by Kate Torralba.

Don't forget to choose which shirt statement you want ["A dark child can brighten your day"; "A chubby kid can live large"; "A short child can stand tall"; "100% real beauty"; and which size you will need: "I'm petite and a big dreamer" (bust: 26-28 inches); "I'm somewhere in between, but just as sweet" (29-32 inches); "I'm big and beautiful" (33-36 inches)].

E-mail your entries to selfesteemchronicles@gmail.com along with your name, age, contact info, school/office.

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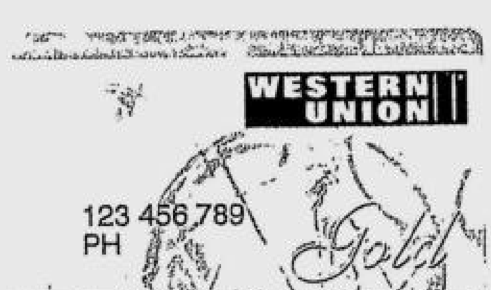

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Air Philippines — 7% discount on Published Fares (website or textsite bookings only)
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ALL THE WAY DHL — $5.00/USD discount on international outbound transactions only for a min. $12.00/USD transaction (not applicable to Jumbo Box, Jumbo Jr. and Express Pallet)
Goldilocks — 5% discount on Greeting Cakes
hbc — Free gift with a minimum purchase of Php125.00

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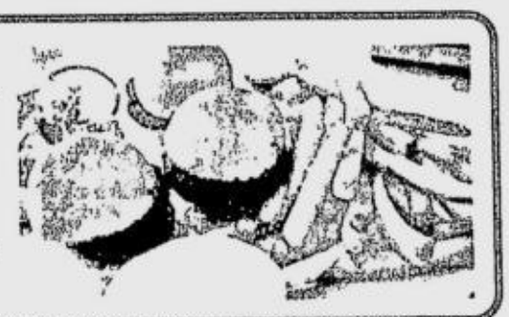
2BU! THERMOMETER

Cheap fares, blog awards and a bald Britney

GRAMS DINER. We have a favorite new resto. It's diner-style and if you go often enough, its staff promise to remember your usual. We love the mini burgers, fries, baby back ribs, chocolate shakes. Visit Grams Diner at the Rockwell Drive.

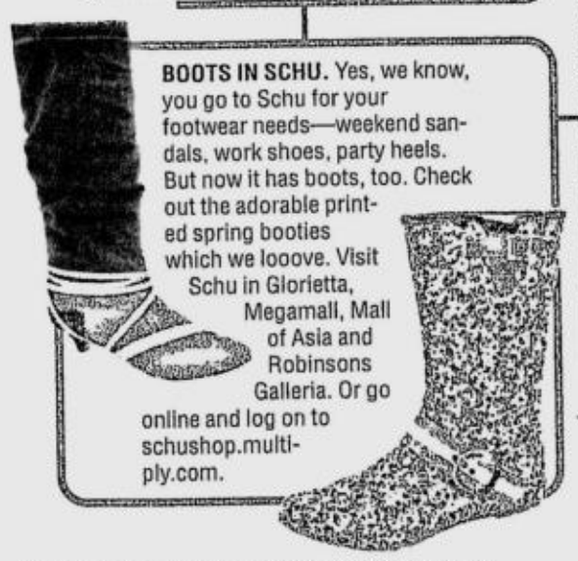


H&M IN HONG KONG. We are big fans of H&M and we're so glad that it has opened very close to home. But we're wondering (hoping, actually), will Manila be next?

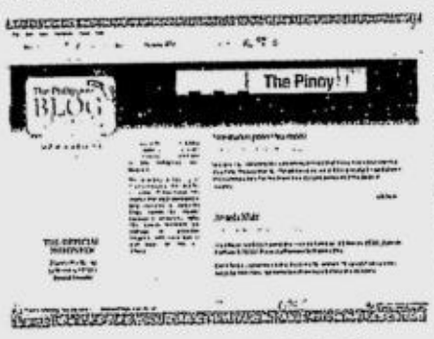
CEBU PACIFIC'S ONE-PESO FLIGHTS. And you thought your one peso couldn't buy anything anymore. Thanks to Cebu Pacific's one-peso flights, people have been able to book flights to places like Boracay, Cebu and even Hong Kong and Singapore for a peso. Sure, you still have to add taxes, but even then, the rates are really affordable. We think it's great to have an airline that gives people the chance to travel even on a tight budget. Now all we have to do is look for hotels that offer piso rates as well.

SEAIR'S DISCOUNT FOR DEAN'S LISTERS. We're not kidding. Seair is offering 50-percent off on airfare for hard-working honor students. It doesn't matter if you're in high school, college or graduate school. Flash your school ID, report card and certificate of excellent academic performance for any semester or term during school year 2006-2007. The promo lasts until December 31, 2007. Patrick Tan, Vice President for Commercial Affairs of SEAIR, says, "We understand the need for students to de-stress after a demanding and hectic term. The promo is open even during peak season to give them more time to have fun, relax and recharge for the next semester." Way cool. Call SEAIR Reservations at (632) 8490100 or visit www.flyseair.com. We really should have studied for the Physics test.

BOOTS IN SCHU. Yes, we know, you go to Schu for your footwear needs—weekend sandals, work shoes, party heels. But now it has boots, too. Check out the adorable printed spring booties which we looove. Visit Schu in Glorietta, Megamall, Mall of Asia and Robinsons Galleria. Or go online and log on to schushop.multiply.com.



300. If blogs are anything to judge by, then every other person on the planet has watched "300." We can't count how many times we've heard or read "Spartans! Enjoy your breakfast, for tonight we dine in hell!" since it started showing last week. At first, we were skeptical: What was so great about a testosterone-fest filled with blood and gore? But the amazing visuals and thrilling action scenes instantly won us over.



THE PHILIPPINE BLOG AWARDS. Pinoys have been blogging away for a number of years now and it's great that The Philippine Blog Awards wants to honor them in a big way. The awards, organized by Gail Dela Cruz-Villanueva, Jayvee Fernandez and Abe Olandres, is supported by Inquirer.net, b5 Media, Globe and many other companies. The ceremony, which will be held at the RCBC Plaza Auditorium in Makati City on March 31, will bring together the country's best and brightest bloggers. 2bU! will be hosting the after party. Visit www.philippineblogawards.com.ph.

SMASHBOX O-GLOW
Call it a miracle in a tube, call it high-tech makeup. Smashbox's O-Glow is basically just clear gel when you squeeze it out of its tube, but dab some of it on your cheeks and watch them turn naturally rosy: body heat activates the gel, so when it comes into contact with your skin, you'll look like you just downed a glass of wine.

UNLITXT
While people aren't exactly trading in their Globe SIM cards after the company increased its unlimited text messaging service rates drastically (with the four-day Unlitxt rate going at P80 now, when it used to be P50 for five days), the move smacks too much of corporate greed. While it does have its advantages (less people sending useless forwarded messages), a lot of consumers are left with no choice but to subscribe to Globe's new rates.

UNROYAL TREATMENT FROM BURGER KING. Last Sunday, we were craving Burger King's chicken sandwich. Because the chain doesn't have a delivery hotline, we called its E. Rodriguez branch to ask if it was willing to deliver. A yes or no would have sufficed but the girl who answered wanted to know where we were. We gave her the address and were told to call the Timog branch. We called the Timog branch but a guy told us to call the E. Rodriguez branch. We explained that we were very near both branches and that it shouldn't be a problem. The guy made us wait for a long time on the line. We finally got to the bottom of things. He admitted they didn't have riders available. Shame, the chicken sandwich is really good, too.

BALD BRITNEY. And it's not just her. You look at all these famous young people—they have the world in their hands, they are raking in the moolah, they are adored, they have people at their beck and call, and you wonder what makes them go berserk, what pushes them to go wild, why they want to throw everything away. And having the paparazzi constantly chasing them isn't a good enough answer.

PINOY SEX SCANDALS. It's not just Paris Hilton anymore. The past couple of weeks, another local sex scandal has been making the rounds, this time supposedly involving a former TV newscaster. We feel awful for her. And we also hope stories like these serve as a lesson—to keep the camera away when you're doing things you don't want the world to see.

CELEBS WHO WANT TO BECOME PUBLIC OFFICIALS. There's a reason why it's called public service, but some celebrities just don't get it. Take Manny Pacquiao, who thinks that his popularity as a boxer immediately qualifies him for a seat in the congress. "*Kailan pa ako tatakbo, pag laos na ako? May maniniwala pa ba sa akin? Mas advantage sa akin na tumakbo ako ngayon kasi sikat ako*," said the boxing champ who apparently took one too many hits on the head. We don't have anything against celebrities—honest!—but we think they have to prove themselves first in the political arena before running for public office. Voters seem to be wisening up, though. Showbiz candidates Cesar Montano and Richard Gomez are lagging behind in the surveys.

PHILIPPINE NTF2007 National Trade Fair
14 – 18 MARCH 2007

A one-stop exhibit of new and innovative products combining homegrown materials and Filipino creativity, from gifts and home decor, fashion accessories, furniture, houseware, toys, Christmas and holiday decor, to arts and crafts, including a wide selection of delicacies from the 17 regions of the Philippines.

Come celebrate the Filipino lifestyle --only at the National Trade Fair.

Furniture | Food | Fashion Accessories | Housewares | Gifts | Arts and Crafts

SHOW HIGHLIGHTS

PDDCP Special Setting
Selected new designs from Product Development and Design Center of the Philippines (PDDCP)'s 1,363 designs created for the NTF.

Raw Materials Showcase
Exciting applications for locally abundant materials such as seashells, climbing bamboo, and woody vines.

One Town One Product (OTOP)
Showcasing uniquely different offerings from featured towns.

TRAININGS/SEMINARS

14 March 2007 (Wednesday)
Function Room B
2:00 - 6:00 pm
Seminar on Packaging Design for the Japanese Market *(By Invitation Only)*

15 March 2007 (Thursday)
Function Room B
Conducted by:
Cottage Industry & Technology Center (CITC)
10:30 - 12:00 nn
Seminar on Bead Working (Fashion Accessories)
1:30 - 5:30 pm
Seminar on Stuffed Toy Making

16 March 2007 (Friday)
Function Room B
Conducted by:
Philippine Chamber of Handicrafts Industries (PCHI)
10:30 - 12:00 nn
Modern Strategies to Make Business Competitive: A Blue Ocean Strategy
1:30 - 3:00 pm
Corporate Social Responsibility: Improving Workplace Capability of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
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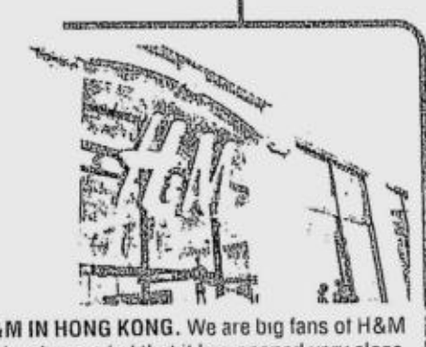
2BU! THERMOMETER

Cheap fares, blog awards and a bald Britney

300. If blogs are anything to judge by, then every other person on the planet has watched "300." We can't count how many times we've heard or read "Spartans! Enjoy your breakfast, for tonight we dine in hell!" since it started showing last week. At first, we were skeptical: What was so great about a testosterone-fest filled with blood and gore? But the amazing visuals and thrilling action scenes instantly won us over.

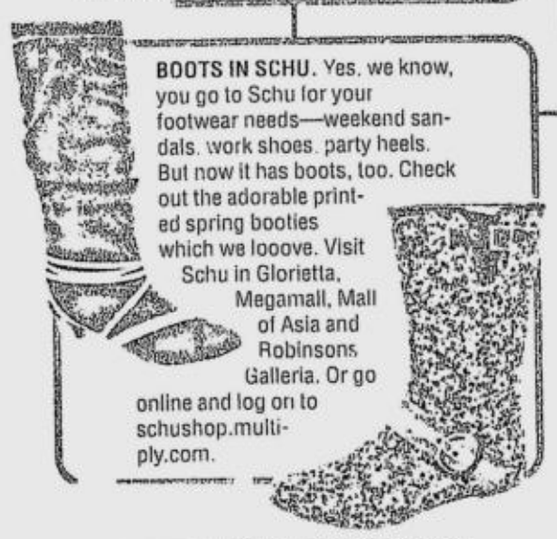
GRAMS DINER. We have a favorite new resto. It's diner-style and if you go often enough, its staff promise to remember your usual. We love the mini burgers, fries, baby back ribs, chocolate shakes. Visit Grams Diner at the Rockwell Drive.

CEBU PACIFIC'S ONE-PESO FLIGHTS. And you thought your one peso couldn't buy anything anymore. Thanks to Cebu Pacific's one-peso flights, people have been able to book flights to places like Boracay, Cebu and even Hong Kong and Singapore for a peso. Sure, you still have to add taxes, but even then, the rates are really affordable. We think it's great to have an airline that gives people the chance to travel even on a tight budget. Now all we have to do is look for hotels that offer piso rates as well.



H&M IN HONG KONG. We are big fans of H&M and we're so glad that it has opened very close to home. But we're wondering (hoping, actually), will Manila be next?

BOOTS IN SCHU. Yes, we know, you go to Schu for your footwear needs—weekend sandals, work shoes, party heels. But now it has boots, too. Check out the adorable printed spring booties which we looove. Visit Schu in Glorietta, Megamall, Mall of Asia and Robinsons Galleria. Or go online and log on to schushop.multiply.com.



SEAIR'S DISCOUNT FOR DEAN'S LISTERS. We're not kidding. Seair is offering 50-percent off on airfare for hard-working honor students. It doesn't matter if you're in high school, college or graduate school. Flash your school ID, report card and certificate of excellent academic performance for any semester or term during school year 2006-2007. The promo lasts until December 31, 2007. Patrick Tan, Vice President for Commercial Affairs of SEAIR, says, "We understand the need for students to de-stress after a demanding and hectic term. The promo is open even during peak season to give them more time to have fun, relax and recharge for the next semester." Way cool. Call SEAIR Reservations at (632) 8490100 or visit www.flyseair.com. We really should have studied for the Physics test.

SMASHBOX O-GLOW
Call it a miracle in a tube, call it high-tech makeup. Smashbox's O-Glow is basically just clear gel when you squeeze it out of its tube, but dab some of it on your cheeks and watch them turn naturally rosy: body heat activates the gel, so when it comes into contact with your skin, you'll look like you just downed a glass of wine.

smashbox

THE PHILIPPINE BLOG AWARDS. Pinoys have been blogging away for a number of years now and it's great that The Philippine Blog Awards wants to honor them in a big way. The awards, organized by Gail Dela Cruz-Villanueva, Jayvee Fernandez and Abe Olandres, is supported by Inquirer.net, b5 Media, Globe and many other companies. The ceremony, which will be held at the RCBC Plaza Auditorium in Makati City on March 31, will bring together the country's best and brightest bloggers. 2bU! will be hosting the after party. Visit www.philippineblogawards.com.ph.

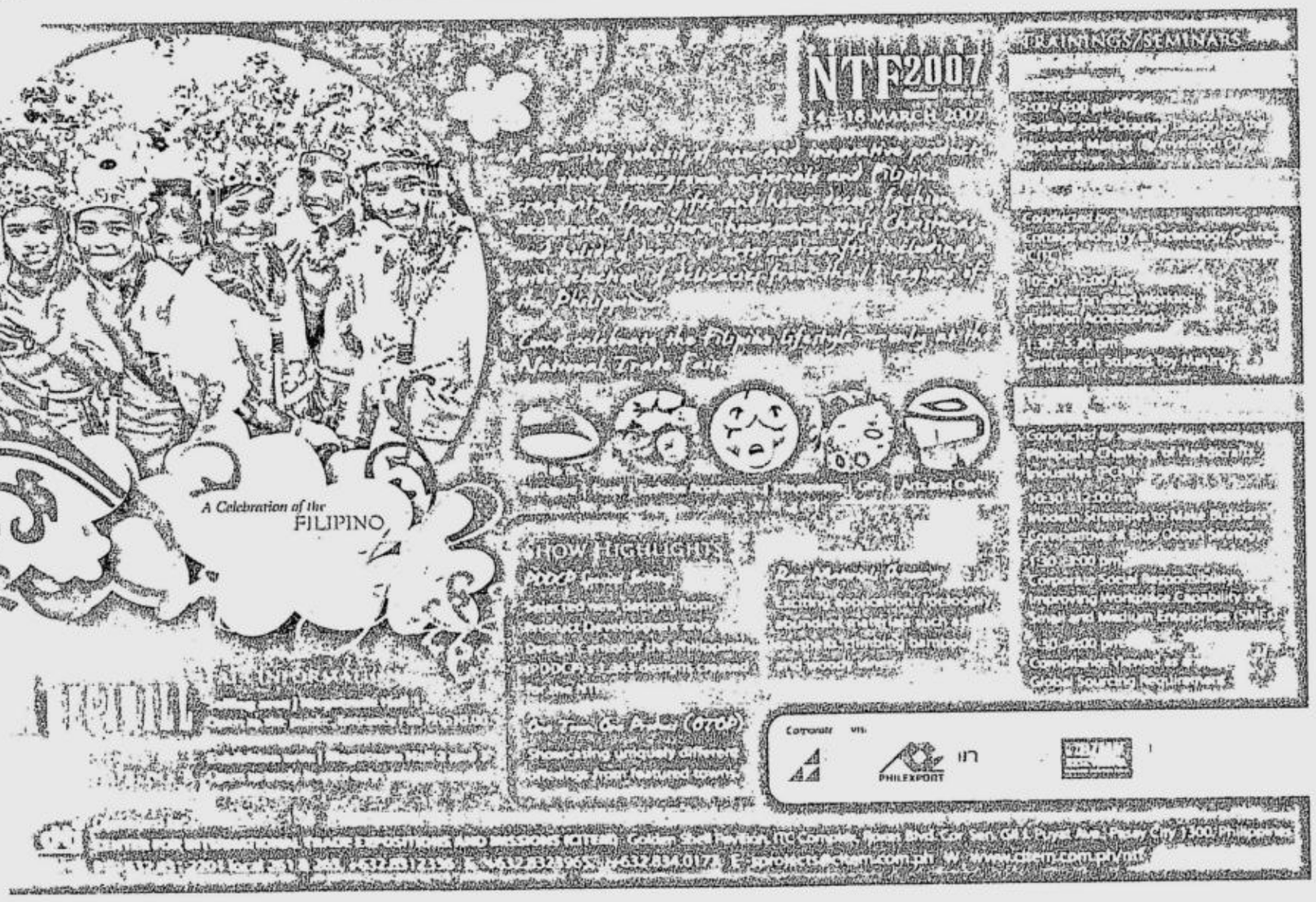
UNLITXT
While people aren't exactly trading in their Globe SIM cards after the company increased its unlimited text messaging service rates drastically (with the four-day Unlitxt rate going at P80 now, when it used to be P50 for five days), the move smacks too much of corporate greed. While it does have its advantages (less people sending useless forwarded messages), a lot of consumers are left with no choice but to subscribe to Globe's new rates

UNROYAL TREATMENT FROM BURGER KING. Last Sunday, we were craving Burger King's chicken sandwich. Because the chain doesn't have a delivery hotline, we called its E. Rodriguez branch to ask if it was willing to deliver. A yes or no would have sufficed but the girl who answered wanted to know where we were. We gave her the address and were told to call the Timog branch. We called the Timog branch but a guy told us to call the E. Rodriguez branch. We explained that we were very near both branches and that it shouldn't be a problem. The guy made us wait for a long time on the line. We finally got to the bottom of things. He admitted they didn't have riders available. Shame, the chicken sandwich is really good, too.

BALD BRITNEY. And it's not just her. You look at all these famous young people—they have the world in their hands, they are raking in the moolah, they are adored, they have people at their beck and call, and you wonder what makes them go berserk, what pushes them to go wild, why they want to throw everything away. And having the paparazzi constantly chasing them isn't a good enough answer.

PINOY SEX SCANDALS. It's not just Paris Hilton anymore. The past couple of weeks, another local sex scandal has been making the rounds, this time supposedly involving a former TV newscaster. We feel awful for her. And we also hope stories like these serve as a lesson—to keep the camera away when you're doing things you don't want the world to see.

CELEBS WHO WANT TO BECOME PUBLIC OFFICIALS. There's a reason why it's called public service, but some celebrities just don't get it. Take Manny Pacquiao, who thinks that his popularity as a boxer immediately qualifies him for a seat in the congress. "*Kailan pa ako tatakbo, pag laos na ako? May maniniwala pa ba sa akin? Mas advantage sa akin na tumakbo ako ngayon kasi sikat ako,*" said the boxing champ who apparently took one too many hits on the head. We don't have anything against celebrities—honest!—but we think they have to prove themselves first in the political arena before running for public office. Voters seem to be wisening up, though. Showbiz candidates Cesar Montano and Richard Gomez are lagging behind in the surveys.



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RETAKE OF PRECEDING FRAME

Shanghai sensation

"PEARLS OF THE ORIENT" IS A fashion exposition that brings together six designers—Eric Pineda, Boying Eustaquio, Leonard Co, Joel Pros, Jeff Rogador and Reian Mata—who will present their takes on turn-of-the-century Shanghai fashion on April 26 at the NBC Tent, Fort Global City.

"Shanghai at the turn of the century was already a flourishing capital of trade and commerce, and its affluence found sublime interpretation in the way its well-heeled dressed up. From a fashion point of view, Shanghai in those days already offered a multitude of creative inspirations," explains director Sidney Perez Sio.

He adds, "The challenge for the designers lies in putting a modern twist to that fashionably distinctive era. The result of the landmark styles of Shanghai and the participating designers' personal interpretations is what the audience will see in 'Pearls of the Orient.'"

Each of the designers is working according to an assigned fashion suite, with his respective birth element as creative inspiration: Wedding Finery for Co inspired by the element of Air; Show Biz Glamour for Eustaquio inspired by Earth; Avant Garde for Mata inspired by Metal; Show Biz Glamour for Pineda inspired by Wood; Sleek Wear for Pros inspired by Water; and Street Wear for Jeff Rogador inspired by Fire.

"Pearls of the Orient" is the initial venture of entrepreneur Beth Mathana under MTMC Philippines.

The vertical challenge

From page E1

childhood ambition of being a flight stewardess flew out of the cockpit. How I envied girls that were taller than me. They seemed to be more confident, more beautiful and more desirable for teachers who wanted them for plays and programs. And of course, taller ladies stood to gain more attention from the boys than the squat set. It's a travesty because I had crushes on tall boys, who in turn made goo-goo eyes to statuesque lasses—the pattern was recurrent. I found it funny that even in a day and age when beauty centers offer fix-ups from botox to nose lifts to augmentation of the derriere, I haven't heard of a "height injection"—because if they did, I said to a friend, I'd probably be the first in line!

As I matured, petty insecurities turned into self-deprecating episodes. Curious about my impending future, I looked into classified ads, only to be astounded at the height requirements. I then wondered if anyone would ever hire me because I was short, and if I would ever get bypassed at the corporate ladder simply because I didn't have the physical stature for board meeting photo-ops. I thought if I were a boy, then life would be much harder for me—even if I were superbly athletic, I won't get picked for sporting leagues! And about love, I was once even worried that I won't ever get married because men would be too scared to mingle their chromosomes with my genes of potential dwarfism!

Time passed by, and gradually I accepted my fate. Maybe it was God's plan that I remain only a little over five feet. But instead of whining about my imperfections, I channeled my energies instead on some things that I could get major work on, like my studies, and my hobby in writing. I have a future to deal with, and I'm thankful for my parents, family and friends, that even in my shortcomings (physical or otherwise), they believed in me and loved me for what I truly am... they are the ones that made me realize I don't have to be anything in order to be accepted—it's what's in me that counts.

"The measure of a man" shouldn't be taken in a literal sense. Most of the greatest people that ever lived were recognized for their achievements, not for how they looked or how tall they were. No one said José Rizal couldn't be proclaimed national hero just because he didn't meet a certain height requirement, and Napoleon didn't discourage himself from being a great leader just because horses towered over him!

I may be vertically challenged, so what? I'm still a human being, having unique abilities, strengths and talents, and capable of living and loving. I don't have to wear five-inch heels to make a point. I don't have to think I'll never be the model, stewardess or athlete that I wished to be—I could simply strut down the street with all confidence and feel like a million bucks.

I have so many goals in life that I want to accomplish, and nothing can deter me from doing so. If I trust myself that I can do it, I can ultimately reach heights far more than a tiny lady like me could ever imagine. In a just workplace, hardwork pays off and promotions come by when you deserve it. And what about the boys? If they're too superficial, then it's their loss for not seeing a diamond in the rough. (Ha ha ha!)

So if by a strange circumstance I mysteriously stumble on a beauty pageant, I'd simply smile, wave and say, "I'm Herschel, 5'1", and I couldn't care less!"

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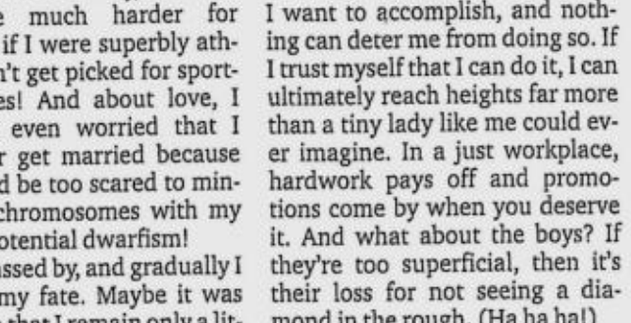

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AXN has just made the call for racers to put their skills and endurance to the test in the second season of the biggest AXN original production, "The Amazing Race Asia 2!"

Producers of the Asian edition of the Emmy Award-winning "The Amazing Race" has confirmed that the ultimate adventure is back with a call for a fresh batch of hopefuls racing for glory. Judging from the response to the first "The Amazing Race Asia," AXN is bracing itself for another flood of hopefuls responding to the call for entry.

"The first 'The Amazing Race Asia' was a runaway success. Even before Season 1 ended, viewers were already calling in to ask if they could send in their entries. So we are opening it for casting earlier this time so as to find the best cast possible," said Ricky Ow, general manager of SPE Networks-Asia.

Registration is now open and will close on March 30. All interested participants should submit their applications in teams of two, and they must be living and/or working in Asia (excluding Australia, New Zealand and the Middle East). All contestants are required to be aged 21 and above, must speak English as well as possess both a valid driving license and an international passport.

How to register?

Entry forms can be downloaded from www.axn-asia.com, and need to be sent in together with a three-minute video to the address stated on the website. All information on the race can be found on www.axn-asia.com. E-mail Amazing_Race_Asia@axn-asia.com.

All applications may be submitted until March 30 (5 p.m. Singapore time). Sign up now for the most thrilling adventure of your lifetime!

SEASON one winners, Malaysians Zabrina Fernandez and Joe Jer Tee

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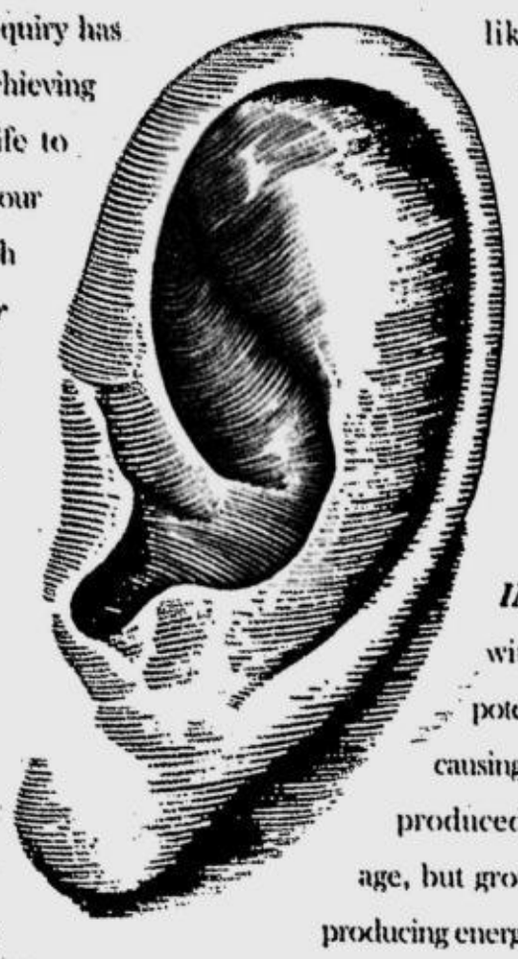

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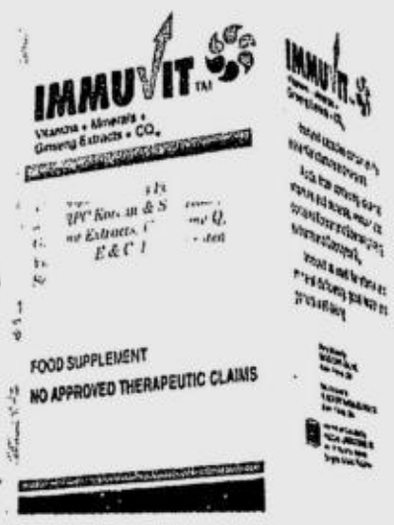

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Yehey!'s Pinoy Votester: The young are watching

WHEN IT COMES TO SENATORIAL BETS, some young voters are saying Rep. Francis "Chiz" Escudero this early. They're going for relatively younger blood, even perceived "rebels with a cause" such as Oakwood mutiny leader Antonio Fuentes Trillanes IV and Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano.

While the current 63 votes for Sorsogon' s Escudero are hardly an indication that he will be the next Mr. Palengke (No. 1 in the senatorial elections Mar Roxas II in 2002), the voting trend for the Top 6 senatorial candidates on just launched Pinoy Votester 2007 on Yehey.com is nothing to sneeze at.

With just the click of a mouse, users get to "Add to My Vote List" their favorite senatorial candidates—their warm-up toward the election run-up—and have their voices heard in cyberspace.

This interactive online portal suits young voters like 18-year-old Em de Leon, who eats and breathes the Net and does not fancy flipping the pages of newspapers for the latest in politics. Just by actively accumulating friends through online social networking and blogging her biases to them twice daily, Em holds and unleashes viral marketing without her knowing it.

This May, she is about to cast her vote for the first time—a newbie Pinoy voter. She recognizes that her one vote could potentially shape the future of the nation—for better or worse—so she instinctively turns to the Net to do her homework.

Through Pinoy Votester 2007 (www.votester.com.ph), she gets to know the senatorial candidates, party lists, election timeline, latest election-related news, what other young users are saying in election blogs, who's leading in the online polls, and other interactive features.

Among the busiest interactive features of Votester are the Top 6 senatorial bets and Top 6 party lists. Users can check out the candidates' and party lists' credentials and affiliations, virtually vote for them by clicking on "Add to My Vote List," and even leave testimonials for their chosen candidates.

"We want to provide a venue for young people to get involved in the coming elections, not just by casting their votes in May, but by getting their voices heard and feeling their pulse," says Yehey.com president and CEO Donald Lim.

Yehey! is among the top three most-viewed websites in the country, with over 30 million page views a month and nearly 300,000 registered users.

More than revolving around the May 2007 personalities, Votester offers its young users the venue to express themselves. Find out how the young are responding to the question: "What do you think of the abundance of celebrities vying for positions in government?" And why is senatorial candidate and Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson getting a bad rap?

Votester stirs up interest in hot election-related issues through features like the online polls and election blogs, which send out the message to candidates that the young are watching.

In addition, Yehey! is also inviting users and media to participate in a series of virtual press conferences on election-related topics every 10 a.m. for nine Thursdays from March 15.

Yehey! partnered with the Institute for Solidarity in Asia, a nonpartisan coalition advocating active citizens' participation in governance, and editorial services provider Writers Edge Inc., for a project called Voters Ed @ Brewing Point, a venue to educate voters online on the May 2007 elections and larger responsible citizenship.

Topics range from Election 101 (What every voter must know); In Search of a Philippine President for 2030; How the Next Gen Votes; to Star Struck (Dividing the thinning line between acting and the serious work of nation-building).

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Night of the underdogs

By Nini Valera

RICH ASUNCION AND MART ESCUdero prevailed during the "Starstruck The Next Level" elimination round Sunday night. Stef Prescott and Paulo Avelino bowed out of the competition.

Three weeks earlier, Asuncion and Escudero were eliminated from the GMA 7 reality talent search but regained their spots after Jesi Corcuera got the boot.

On Sunday night, Asuncion and Escudero, former underdogs, were clearly back in the limelight.

"I was stunned," Escudero, a 16-year-old high school student admitted to INQUIRER Entertainment. "I thought I would be going, not Paulo."

Asuncion, who was seen consoling a hysterical Prescott after the show, said she was proud of herself for not being dropped a second time.

"Everybody deserves to win. But being eliminated is no longer as frightening as it was for me the first time around," said Asuncion, a former Miss Tagbilaran.

No expectations

"I have trained myself not to expect anything more. I was crying during rehearsals last Saturday. I thought I would be finished this week. It's very hard to compete on the basis of text votes," added Asuncion, who earlier claimed to be the poorest among the contestants.

She even admitted that she had planned to borrow money so she could buy cell cards to vote for herself.

"But my mother told me not to do that and, instead, to just rely on God's plan for me," she said.

Asuncion said she sent part of her weekly allowance and consolation prize of P30,000 (when she was booted off) to her family in Bohol.

"I have already earned about P100,000 from 'Starstruck' and I'm happy to help my family," she added. Asuncion's mother is a fish vendor; her father, a messenger in a bank.

Prescott, who was dead set on winning from the very start, told the INQUIRER she would still pursue her dream of stardom.

"I'm not giving up," she said. "I will

NIGHT/ F3

RICH Asuncion stays on, too ....

... and so does Aljur Abrenica

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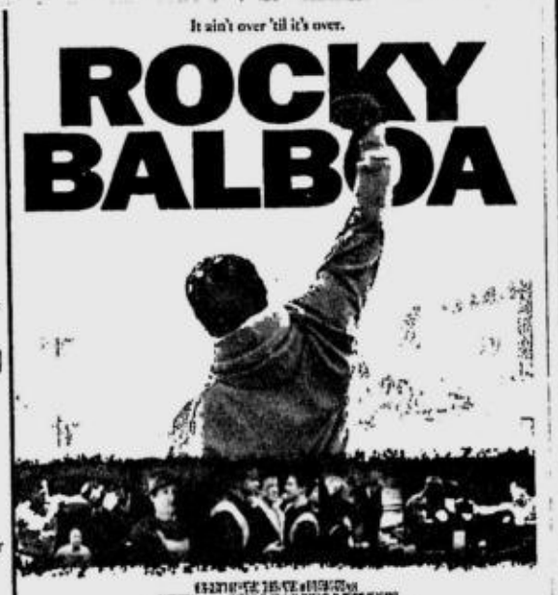
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1 300
2 DREAMGIRLS
3 PATHFINDER
4 SIQUIJOR
5 HAPPY HEARTS
6 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
7 BECAUSE I SAID SO
8 BATAD
9 YOU GOT ME
10 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 300
2 PATHFINDER
3 DREAMGIRLS
4 SIQUIJOR
5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
6 HAPPY HEARTS

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 PATHFINDER
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 SIQUIJOR
4 300
5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
6 DREAMGIRLS
7 YOU GOT ME
8 GHOST RIDER
9 BATAD

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 PATHFINDER
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 300

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 PATHFINDER
2 DREAMGIRLS
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 GHOST RIDER
5 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
6 300
7 BATAD
8 DEAD PEOPLE 2
9 HAPPY HEARTS
10 YOU GOT ME
11 SIQUIJOR
12 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4123201-04
1 300
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 EPIC MOVIE

SM VALENZUELA 293-3017
1 300
2 THE HITCHER
3 DEAD PEOPLE 2
4 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 BECAUSE I SAID SO
2 300
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 PATHFINDER

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SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 300
2 BECAUSE I SAID SO
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 THE HITCHER
5 BATAD
6 EPIC MOVIE

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 300
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 IT'S A GIRL BOY THING

LUZON

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 MUSIC AND LYRICS
2 FLUSHED AWAY
3 YOU GOT ME
4 NUMBER 23

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 EPIC MOVIE
2 300
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 YOU GOT ME
5 NUMBER 23
6 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CITY LIPA (043) 756-7925
1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 MUSIC ANG LYRIS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 FLUSHED AWAY

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 YOU GOT ME
2 THE FOUNTAIN
3 PRIMEVAL
4 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 BECAUSE I SAID SO
3 THE RETURN
4 300

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 PATHFINDER
3 300
4 DEAD PEOPLE 2

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 FLUSHED AWAY
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 300

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 THE HITCHER
2 RESERVED
3 300
4 YOU GOT ME
5 GHOST RIDER
6 HAPPY HEARTS
7 PRIMEVAL
8 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 300
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO
5 BATAD/ GHOST RIDER
6 YOU GOT ME
7 HAPPY HEARTS
8 SPIRIT TRAP

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010
1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 300
3 ARTHUR AND THE INVINSIBLES
4 YOU GOT ME
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A master spy's cold, cold heart

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WHEN POPULAR ACTORS DIRECT A FILM, viewers expect a lightweight production squeezed into the star's busy acting schedule.

Well, **Robert de Niro** isn't satisfied with such cinematic larks. His current directorial effort, "The Good Shepherd," is nothing less than a treatise on the creation of the Central Intelligence Agency.

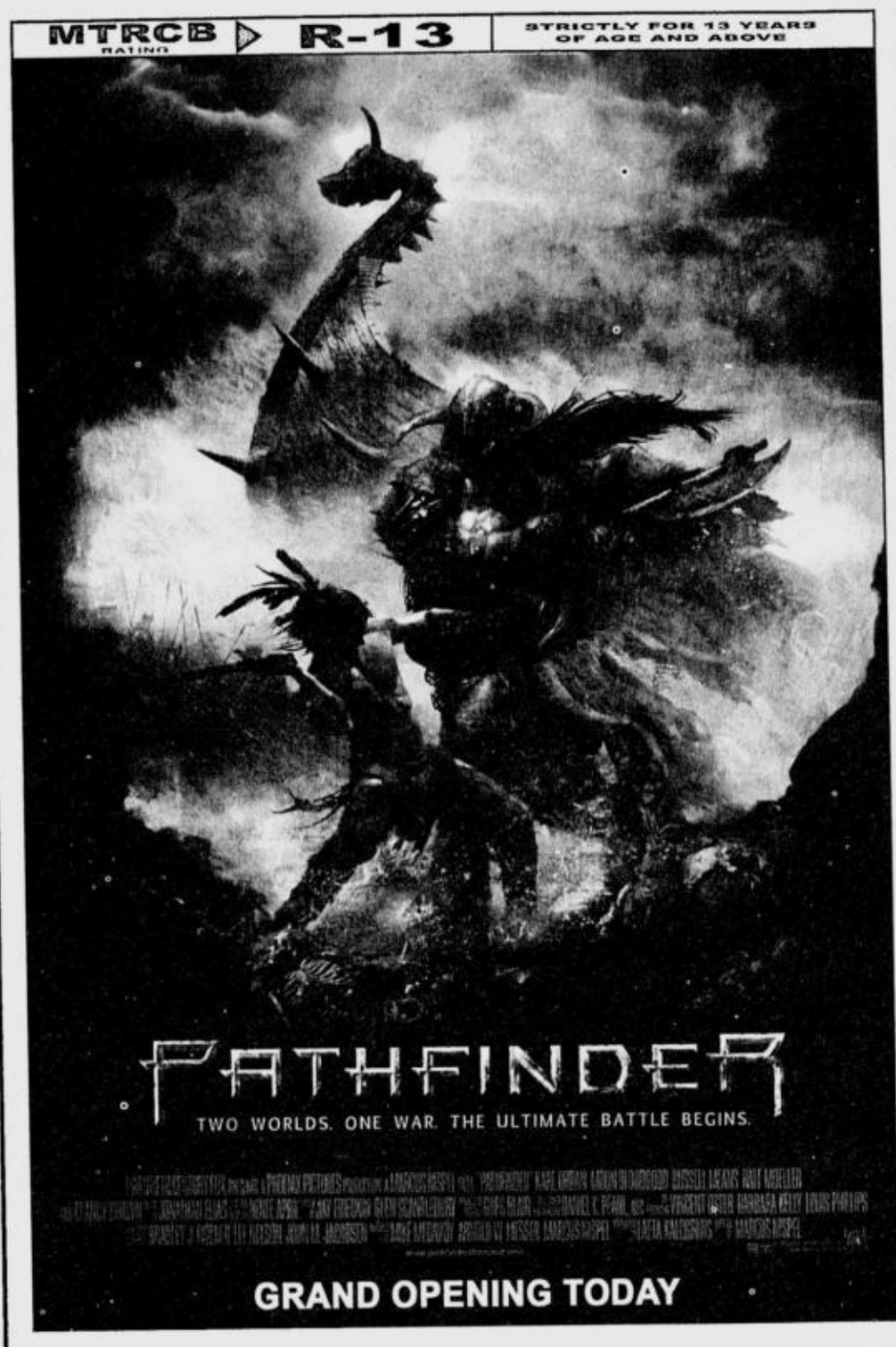
More than that, it delves into the very nature of secrecy, loyalty and "patriotism," and their positive and negative effects, especially in the lives of spies and their clueless loved ones.

De Niro has bitten off a big mouthful in this production, and he sometimes has a hard time assimilating the weighty material. But he handles some scenes masterfully, with the sensitivity and perceptiveness of a potentially great filmmaker.

We have to say "potentially," because De Niro's movie, while occasionally exceptional, doesn't come off like clockwork. Its story spans decades, taking its protagonist (played by **Matt Damon**) from college student to a top spook at the newly-created CIA in the 1960s.

Damon's character starts out full of idealism and a flaming desire to vanquish his country's enemies. Since many of them are unseen, the battle requires Damon to live and work in the shadows as well.

MTRCB RATING R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE



GRAND OPENING TODAY

Duplicity

He's taught by some of the best pioneering sleuths in the world, and proves to be a very apt pupil. Sadly, however, his personal life suffers as a result of his advanced "studies" in the evolving science and art of international duplicity.

His wife (**Angelina Jolie**) and young son don't see him for years, and when he finally comes home, their family's emotional wounds have become scars that affect their relationship for the rest of their lives.

In particular, Jolie's character mourns the death of her love for her husband. It's a marvel to see her transform from a life-loving young flirt to a dark and tragic figure.

Damon's character also has his work cut out for him to establish a personal connection with his son, who grows up into a fearful young man desperate for his father's love. Like his mother, he has been eaten up by the secrecy at the core of Damon's life—with deadly consequences.

No way out

Thus does De Niro's film show how a man's service to his country can have tragic consequences on the people who love him. The master spy has honed his deviousness so acutely, he can't help but act deviously with his loved ones as well.

This creates a conundrum that has no way out: Love is built on intimacy and trust; espionage is lying and mistrust taken to the highest level. Can you confidently love a spy? More to the point, can a spy love you back?

These are significant questions about human nature and worth, and "The Good Shepherd" answers them sadly in the negative. Thus does Damon's character emerge as a new tragic figure who's exactly right for these devious times, when your friend can be your enemy at heart, and your enemy is out to kill not just you but everything and everyone you hold dear.

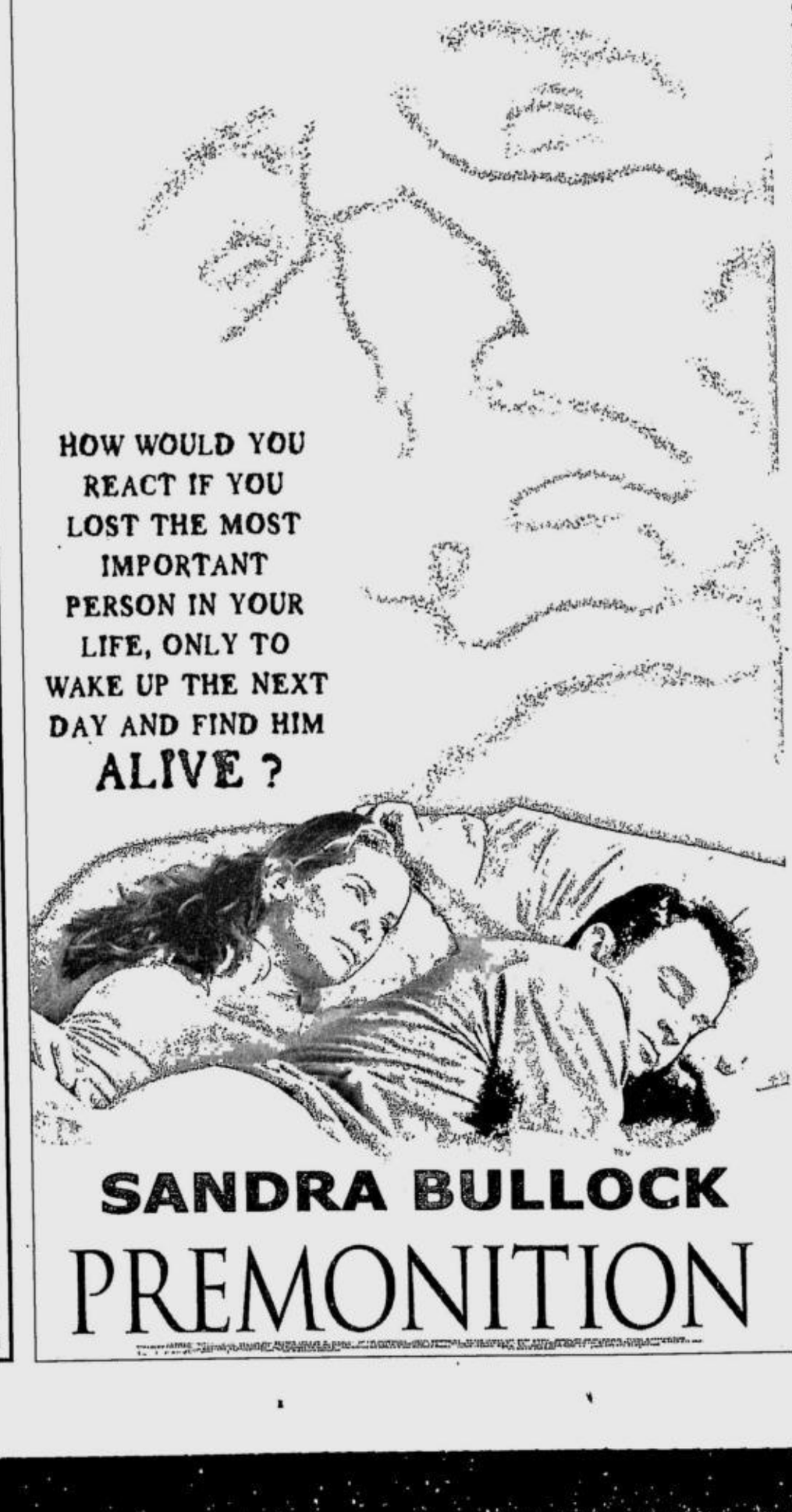
Outstanding

On point of performance, the film is outstanding because De Niro has conscripted some of cinema's best actors to play challenging roles.

The best of the most impressive lot is **Michael Gambon**'s portrayal of Damon's poetry teacher at Yale, who turns out to have much more than versification on his complex mind.

Alas, Damon himself is not up to the standard they set. He does well enough as the anti-hero, but makes the major thespic mistake of playing his secretive, inscrutable character much too inscrutably, so viewers are denied access to his heart of hearts.

OPENS MARCH 21



Night of the underdogs

From page F1

just work harder. I will continue to improve myself, to audition for [other] shows. But I'm happy for Rich."

Inconsistent

Avelino retained his cool.

"Every week, I prepared myself for losing," he said. "It's sad but, on the bright side, I met a lot of people, and made a lot of friends. Right now, I just need a long rest."

An early favorite, Avelino failed miserably during the acting challenges two weeks ago, though he had shown promise in earlier challenges.

"My weakness is, I'm inconsistent," explained Avelino, 18, a freshman at the University of St. Louis in Baguio City. "I am always distracted. I just can't focus. I'll probably return to school next sem."

Moving on

The journey continues for Kris Bernal, Aljur Abrenica, Prince Stefan, Jewel Mische, Asuncion and Escudero, as they slug it out in the next two weeks.

They will compete for the titles Ultimate Love Team, Ultimate Hunk and Ultimate Sweetheart.

Avelino, who was in the running for Ultimate Hunk, said he wants the title to go to Escudero, and that he was betting on Mische to win as Ultimate Sweetheart, and on Bernal and Abrenica for Ultimate Love Team.

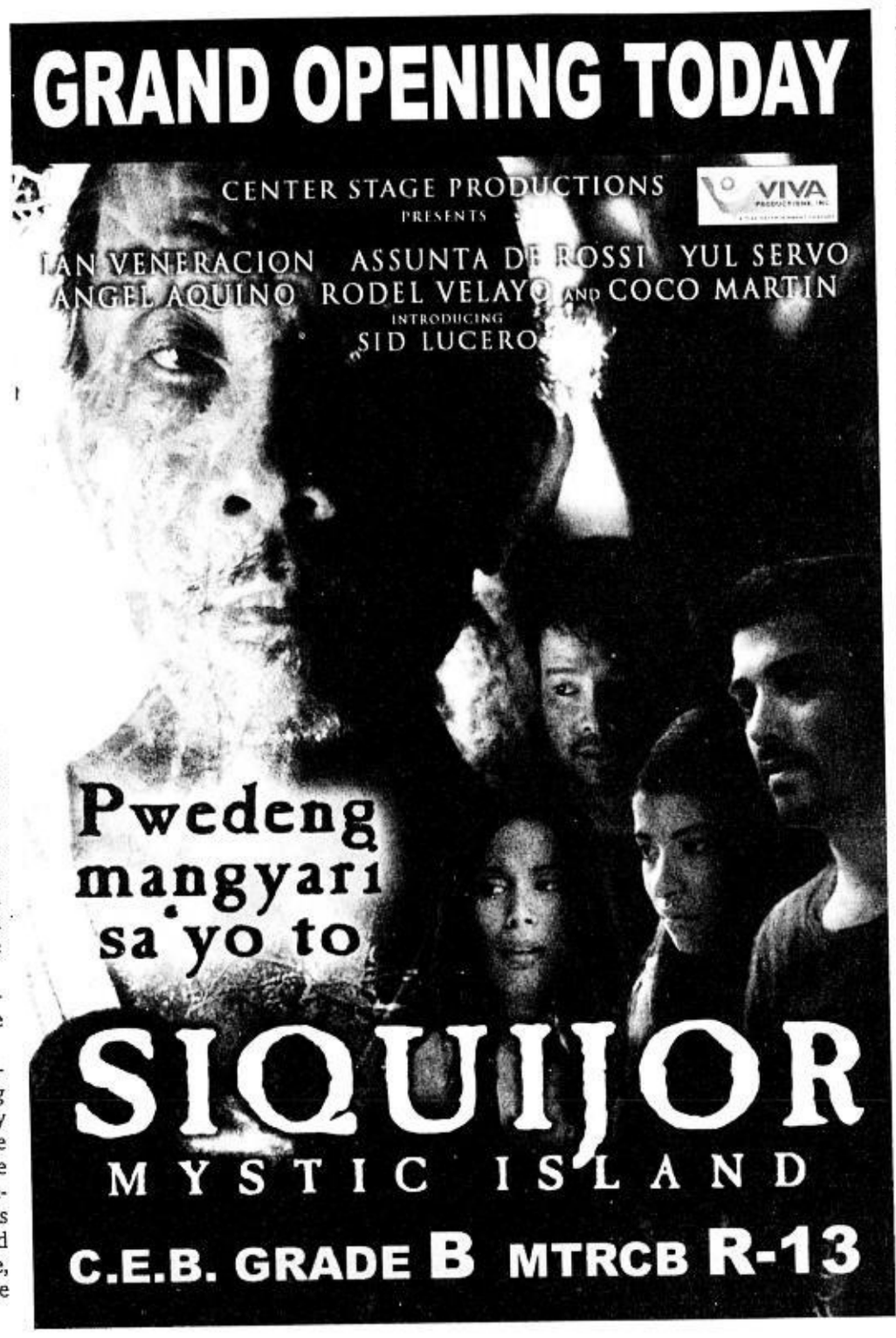
Prescott said whoever wins was fine with her.

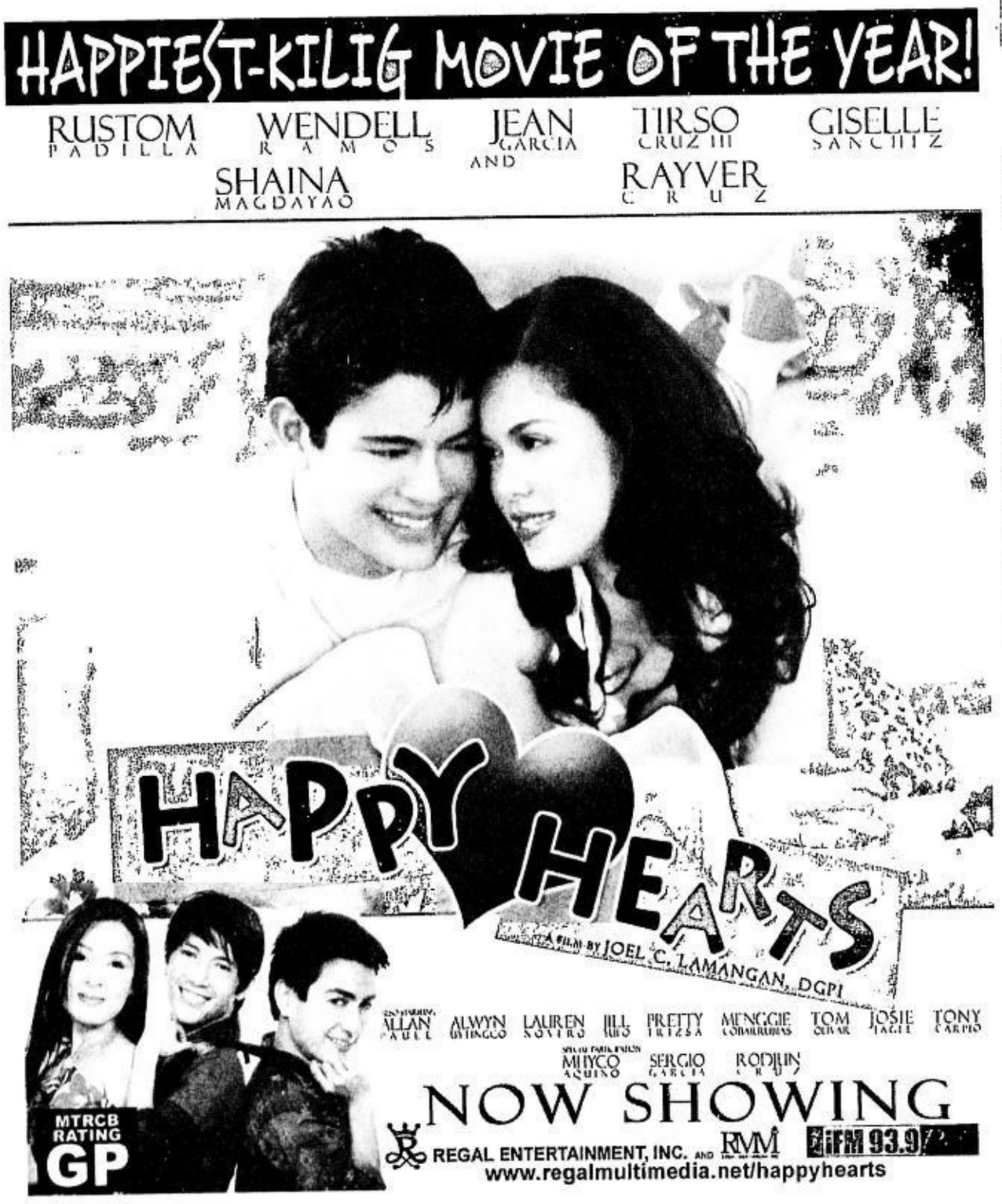
"*Kahit sino sa kanila, basta galingan lang nila* (As long as they make it because they're good)," she said. "No one really deserves to go, but this is part of the game, and even when you lose, life goes on. It's not the end of the world."

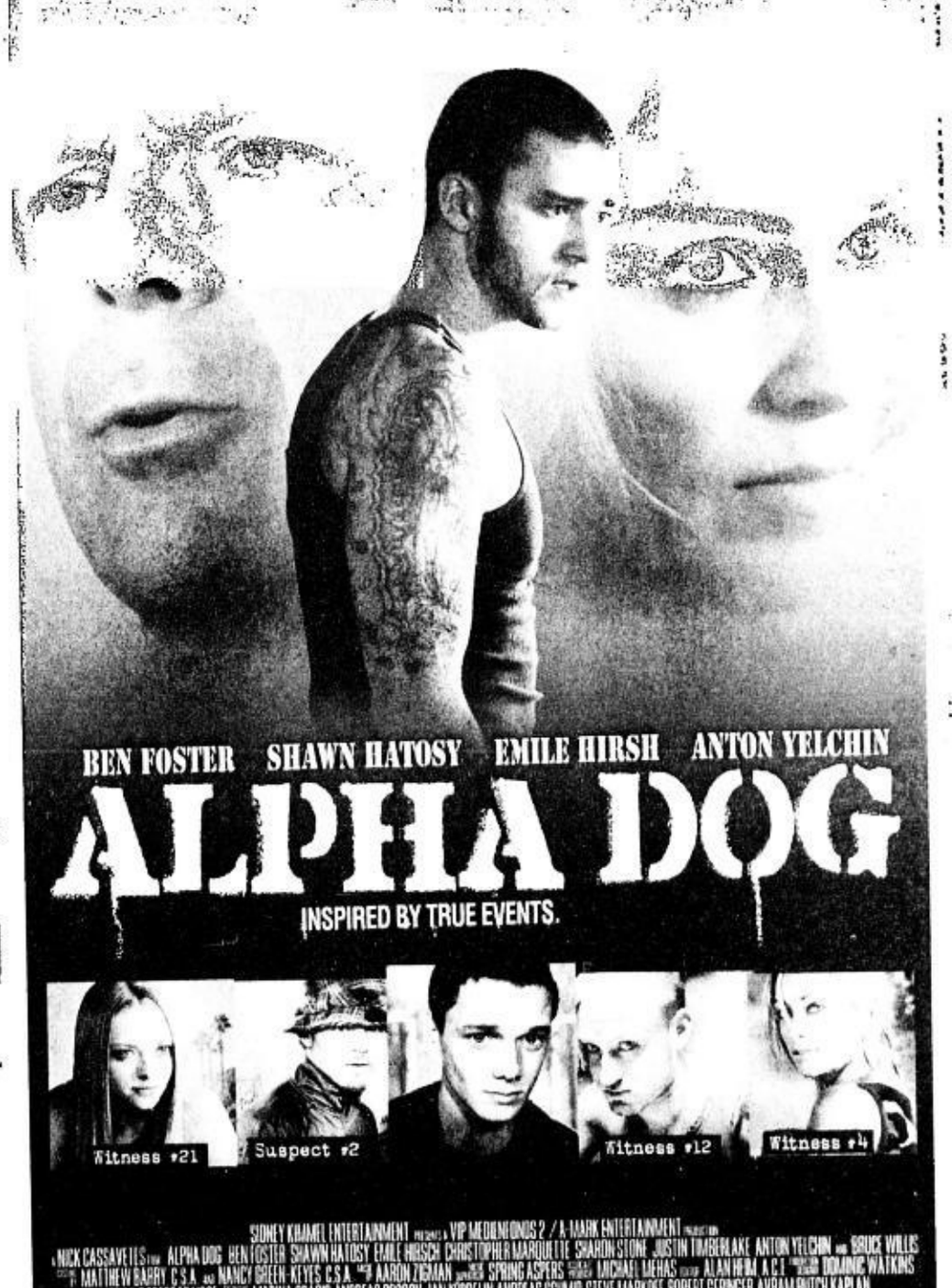
STEF Prescott's tearful farewell

MART Escudero, left, and Prince Stefan are turning out to be viewers' choices

KRIS Bernal shows off gams and grade during Sunday's program. Paulo Avelino is betting on her to win with Aljur Abrenica for Ultimate Love Team.







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2 DREAMGIRLS	7 SYQUIJOR
3 HAPPY HEARTS	8 indieSine: COMPOUND
4 PATHFINDER	9 300
5 SATANICA	10 THE GOOD SHEPHERD YOU GOT ME

ERMITA
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1 SATANICA	
2 HAPPY HEARTS	5 PATHFINDER
3 THE PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS	6 DREAMGIRLS
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO	7 SYQUIJOR

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3 YOU GOT ME	7 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO	8 THE GOOD SHEPHERD SATANICA

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Ticket Price: P91 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

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2 BECAUSE I SAID SO	5 YOU GOT ME
3 HAPPY HEARTS	6 DREAMGIRLS

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1 PATHFINDER	3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
2 300	4 DREAMGIRLS

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1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 300
3 BABEL
4 YOU GOT ME
5 MUSIC and LYRICS

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2 FLUSHED AWAY
3 THE HITCHER
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
5 YOU GOT ME

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2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 300
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

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2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 300
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO

IMUS
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2 BECAUSE I SAID SO
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 300
5 YOU GOT ME

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3 300
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO
5 YOU GOT ME
6 THE HITCHER / THE NUMBER 3

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Ticket Price: P70 (034) 441-0459

1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 300
3 YOU GOT ME
4 HANNIBAL RISING
5 FLUSHED AWAY
6 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES

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Ticket Price: P60.50/67.50/70.50 (033) 336-8070

1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 300
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
5 THE HITCHER
6 indieSine: ROME and JULIET

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This tale follows the romantic journey of two straight women caught in a web of forbidden love. Juliet, a conservative pre-school teacher hires Rome, a liberated businesswoman to be her wedding planner. As they go through the preparations, the two develop a relationship that the groom to be soon finds out.

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2 (DOLBY)	300
3 (DOLBY)	BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 (DOLBY)	PATHFINDER
PREMIERE	
(DOLBY)	FLUSHED AWAY
(DOLBY)	PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

CINEMA 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216

1	300
2	PAT FINDER
3	HAPPY HEART
4	PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

starmall
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7268150

3	HAPPY HEART
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	SATANICA
5	RESRVED

metropolis star cinema
www.cliekthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433894

1	YOU GOT ME
2	SATANICA
3	300
4	HAPPY HEART

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Corporation Telephone No. (044) 600-3025

1	PRIMEVAL
2	YOU GOT ME
3	PLEASE CALL

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5371

1	PRIMEVAL
2	GHOST RIDER
3	RESRVED
4	RESRVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DOLBY)	THE HITCHER
2 (DOLBY)	PRIMEVAL
3 (DTS)	300
4 (DOLBY DTS)	300
5 (DOLBY)	DREAM GIRL
6 (DOLBY)	PATHFINDER
7 (DOLBY)	PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
8 (DOLBY)	SATANICA
9 (DOLBY)	SYQUIJOR
10 (DOLBY)	YOU GOT ME

Blue Wave MAKATI
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sta. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 (DOLBY)	HAPPY HEARTS
2 (DOLBY)	PATHFINDER
3 (DOLBY)	DREAM GIRL
4 (DOLBY)	300

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228

1 (DOLBY)	PATHFINDER
2	300
3	HAPPY HEARTS
4	YOU GOT ME
5	BECAUSE I SAID SO

MARKETPLACE CINEMAS
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	HAPPY HEARTS
2	DEAD PEOPLE-2
3	GHOST RIDER
4	RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1	HAPPY HEARTS
2	SATANICA
3	YOU GOT ME

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)

1	300
2	MUSIC & LYRICS

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY)	NUMBER 23
2	HAPPY HEARTS
3 (DTS)	EPIC MOVIE
4	BECAUSE I SAID SO

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	PRIMEVAL
2	YOU GOT ME

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY)	DREAM GIRL
2 (DOLBY)	300
3 (DOLBY)	BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 (DOLBY)	PATHFINDER

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	MUSIC & LYRICS
2 (DTS)	HAPPY HEARTS
3 (DOLBY)	300
4	

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Buhanj tel. (049) 4111148

1	RESERVED
2 (DOLBY)	RESERVED
3 (DTS)	RESERVED
4	RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	BLOOD CHOCOLATE
2	YOU GOT ME
3 (DOLBY)	PRIMEVAL

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1	YOU GOT ME
2	PRIMEVAL
3 (DOLBY)	GHOST RIDER
4 (DTS)	PLEASE CALL

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1	HAPPY HEARTS
2	PLEASE CALL
3 (DOLBY)	YOU GOT ME

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736

1	PRIMEVAL
2	YOU GOT ME

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1	NUMBER 23
2	DEAD PEOPLE-2

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (DOLBY)	BRIDGE TO TERABITTHIA
2	ASK THE DUSK
3	PLEASE CALL
4 (DTS)	PLEASE CALL

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	300
2	PLEASE CALL
3 (DTS)	HAPPY HEARTS
4	SHAOLIN VS' EVIL DEAD
5	THE MESSENGER

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
2	THE HITCHER
3	BRIDGE TO TERABITTHIA
4	YOU GOT ME

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	ASK THE DUSK
2	DEAD PEOPLE-2

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1	DREAM GIRLS 2:20, 5:20, 8:20, 11:10 PG-13
2	300 12:15, 2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:10 R-13
3	BECAUSE I SAID SO 1:05, 3:20, 5:45, 8:10, 10:45 R-13
4	PATHFINDER 1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00 R-13

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PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS G	DREAM GIRLS PG13	PATHFINDER R13
300 R13	BECAUSE I SAID SO PG13	DREAM GIRLS PG13

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1 DREAMGIRLS
MTRCB. PG-13
1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00

2 300
MTRCB. R-13
1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00

3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
MTRCB. PG-13

4 PATHFINDER
MTRCB. R-13
12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE — FLUSED AWAY MTRCB GP / PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS MTRCB PG-13

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CINEMA 4: DREAMGIRLS PG-13
CINEMA 5: 300 R-13

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MUSIC MUSEUM

March 16 & 23, 2007	SITTI ... IN LOVE	8:30 PM
March 30, 2007	"ARANAS" PILITA C. ... BEC. JOEY LINA BEC. ANGIE REYES "CHAIRMAN BAYANI F.	8:30 PM
May 25, 2007	CHRISTIAN BAUTISTA	8:00 PM

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EVERY MONDAY March 15, 22, 29, 2007	DANCE NIGHT RAYMUND LAUCHENGCO	7:00 PM 8:30 PM

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OPENING TODAY

From page F6

WorstPreviews.com comments: "Early buzz suggests that [it's] no 'Braveheart' and may not even live up to 'The 13th Warrior.' With a $45 million budget, [it] appears poised to become a major disaster. Pure overkill."

Dreamgirls

Stars Beyoncé Knowles, Jamie Foxx, Eddie Murphy, Jennifer Hudson, Danny Glover
Directed by Bill Condon

Based on Michael Bennett's 1981 Broadway hit, this big-screen musical follows the rise of an all-girl trio allegedly inspired by Diana Ross and the Supremes. Hudson won an Oscar Best Supporting Actress trophy as "the proud, self-destructive" Effie. David Ansen of Newsweek raves: "When [Hudson] is center stage, [the movie] transports you to movie musical heaven." Amy Biancolli of Houston Chronicle sums it up as "Motown effervescence ... Hollywood delight." Eleanor Ringel-Gillespie of Atlanta Journal-Constitution agrees: "[It's] a fabulous party. The next morning, you don't remember anything special that happened, but you know you had a blast." Kirk Honeycutt of The Hollywood Reporter differs: "[It's] a musical with energy and talent to burn but missing its heart."

Ex-boyfriend to reveal Kylie Minogue's 'love secrets'

LONDON—AUSTRALIAN ACTOR JASON Donovan will spill the secrets of his relationship with singer Kylie Minogue after signing a deal to write his autobiography, Britain's Sunday Mirror reported.

Donovan, who dated Minogue while starring alongside her on the soap opera "Neighbours" in the late 1980s, has signed a one-million-pound ($1.9 million) deal with HarperCollins, the paper said.

"This is the book every Jason and Kylie fan has been waiting for," his agent told the Mirror.

In the book, Donovan reportedly says the pin-up couple were set to marry before Minogue left him for the late Michael Hutchence, front man of rock band INXS. *AFP*

RUSHES

Big fat wedding

JODHPUR, India—British actress Elizabeth Hurley and her Indian husband Arun Nayar left this desert town on Saturday after their "Big Fat Indian Wedding" ended with tussles between journalists and police.

At least 10 journalists suffered cuts and bruises as police and security guards clashed Friday with paparazzi trying to snap the marathon event, dubbed the "Big Fat Indian Wedding" by local media, an AFP photographer said.

"The great wedding ends in chaos," the Hindustan Times daily newspaper declared in a headline on Saturday.

The dust-up came outside the ancient sheer-walled Meherangarh, literally "Majestic Fort," where the couple held a lavish wedding feast following their traditional Hindu marriage at the hilltop Umaid Bhawan Palace hotel in Jodhpur.

"At least 10 (journalists) suffered bruises and cuts," said AFP photographer R. Raveendran. "The police and security people were also roughing up locals, who started shouting 'Go home Liz.'" *AFP*

WEEKEND BOX OFFICE

Top 10 movies at the North American box office for the three-day weekend beginning Mar 9

300 - Warner Bros. Pictures

TW	LW	Title	Gross	WR
1	☆	300	$70.0 mln	1
2	1	Wild Hogs	$28.0 mln	2
3	4	Bridge to Terabithia	$6.9 mln	4
4	3	Ghost Rider	$6.8 mln	3
5	2	Zodiac	$6.8 mln	2
6	5	The Number 23	$4.3 mln	3
7	6	Norbit	$4.3 mln	5
8	7	Music and Lyrics	$3.8 mln	4
8	10	Breach	$2.6 mln	4
10	11	Amazing Grace	$2.5 mln	3

This Week, Last Week — *Weeks in Release*
☆ *New release*
Based on studio estimates compiled on Sunday
REUTERS

glorietta · GREENBELT · ALABANG TOWN CENTER · AYALA CENTER CEBU · MARKET! MARKET! · Ayala Malls

AT THE CINEMAS

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729 7777.

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 HAPPY HEARTS	2 300	3 SIQUIJOR: MYSTIC ISLAND	4 PATHFINDER
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 BECAUSE I SAID SO	2 PATHFINDER	3 THX DREAMGIRLS GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 NOTES ON A SCANDAL	5 THE GOOD SHEPHERD	6 300	7 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 300		2 BECAUSE I SAID SO	
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX DREAMGIRLS GUARANTEED SEATS		2 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	3 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS GUARANTEED SEATS	4 PATHFINDER GUARANTEED SEATS	5 BECAUSE I SAID SO GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS		2 DREAMGIRLS	
	3 BECAUSE I SAID SO	4 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	5 PATHFINDER	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 300	2 BECAUSE I SAID SO	3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD	4 EPIC MOVIE
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 HAPPY HEARTS		2 SIQUIJOR: MYSTIC ISLAND	
	3 BECAUSE I SAID SO	4 300	5 PATHFINDER	

At the Activity Center

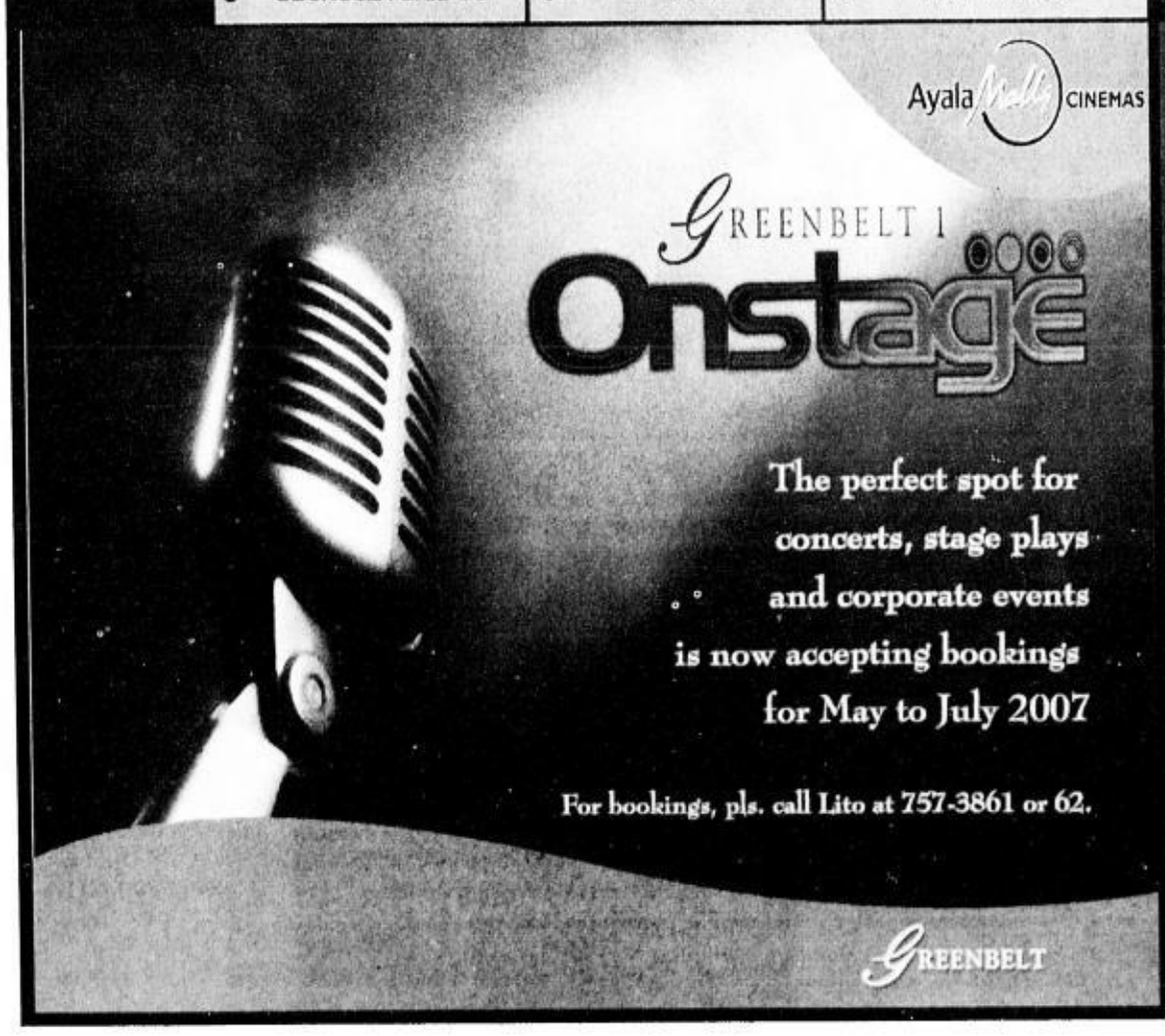
Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 9pm
Greenbelt - 757 4853; from 11am to 9pm
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

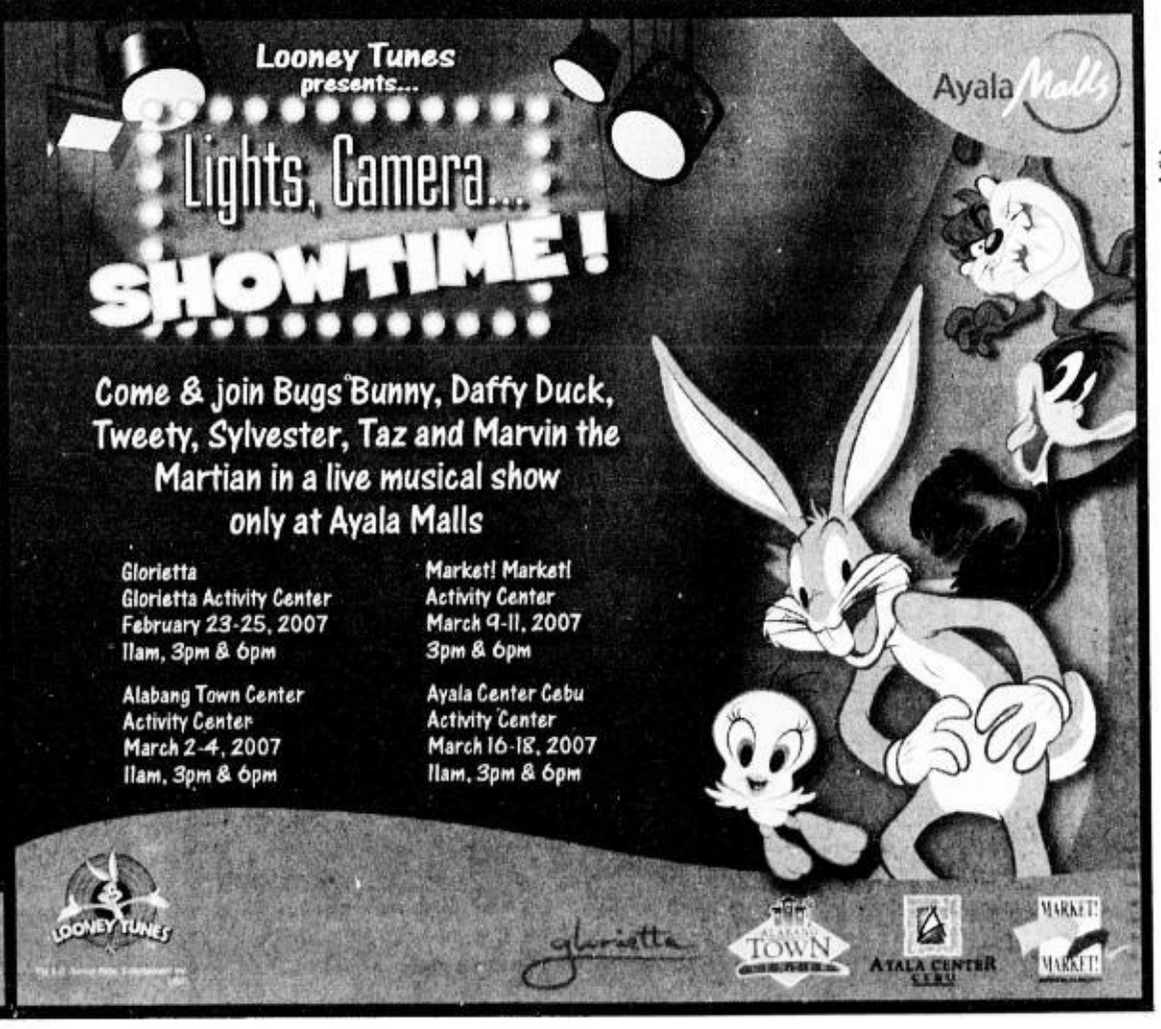
GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
BPI Express Credit Installment Madness February 28 to March 18, 2007	Anson's Exhibit March 5 to 23, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Looney Tunes presents Lights, Camera... Showtime! March 16 to 18, 2007	Nutri-911 Kiddie Alert March 18, 2007

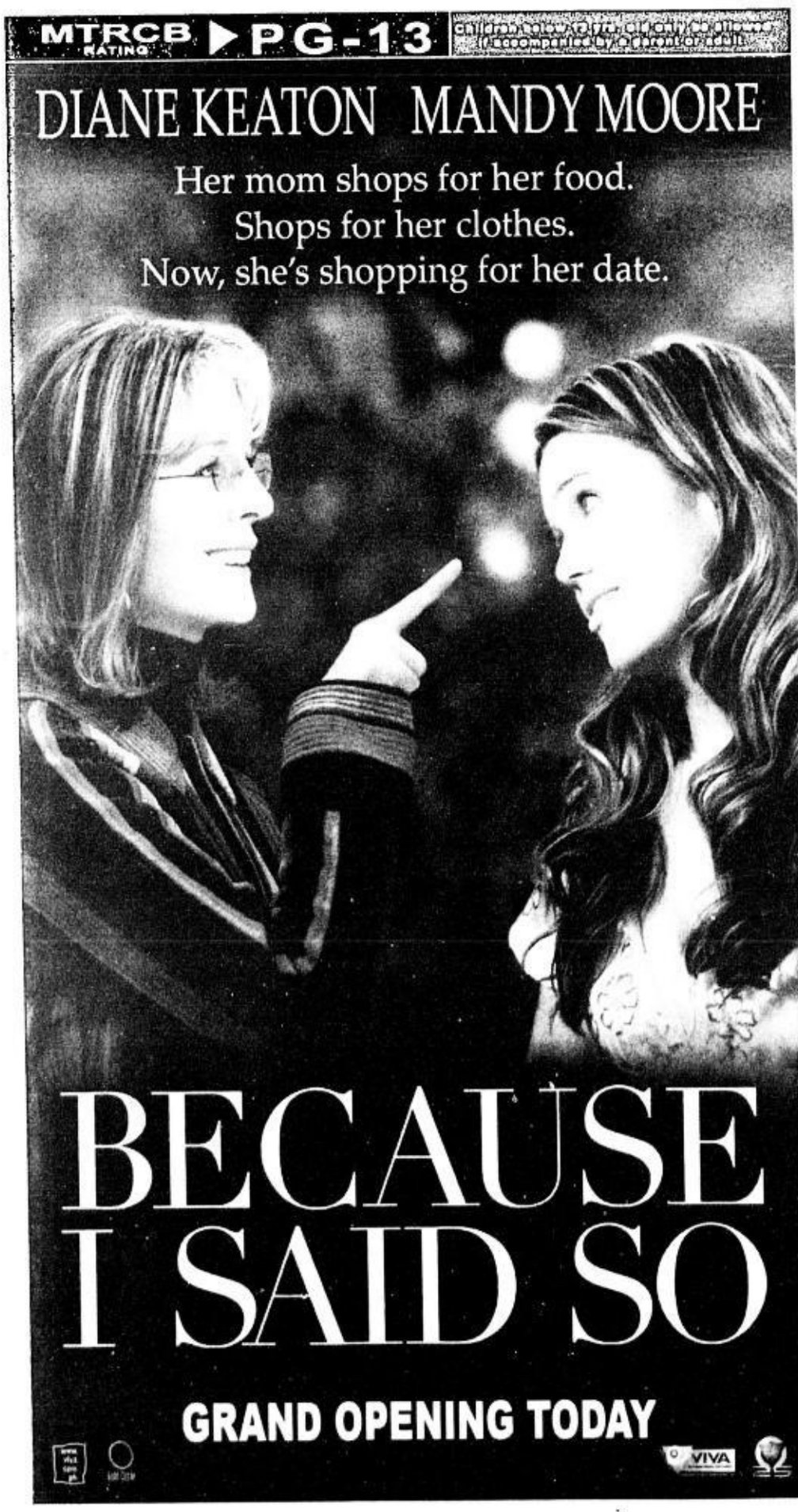
GREENBELT — Greenbelt 5 Sneak Peek presents Collection of Lila Almario
March 7 to 18, 2007

Greenbelt 1 Onstage — Repertory Philippines presents GAY BIRDS
at REP's Globe Theater - March 16 to April 1, 2007
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710

Ayala MUSEUM — Registration Ongoing for Summer Art Workshops at Ayala Museum
For more information, please call
Charis Oliveros at 757-7117 to 21 local 29







OPENING TODAY

Siquijor, Mystic Island

Stars Angel Aquino, Ian Veneracion, Assunta de Rossi, Coco Martin, Sid Lucero, Yul Servo

Directed by Mark Philipp Espina

A rowdy and randy TV crew from Manila travels to a Visayan island to shoot a docu on rumored witches. The city folks' impertinence results in horrifying tragedy. Billed as a local version of "The Blair Witch Project," this thriller is described by producer Dante Mendoza as a "cautionary tale about urban arrogance." Graded B by the Cinema Evaluation Board (CEB), this film is described by reviewers as "an ambitious project that is competently done ... The direction is impressive for a beginner. The visuals [are] exciting; the production design, appropriate and functional. It's well-cast, with Veneracion giving a strong, commanding [portrayal]."

Batad: Sa Paang Palay

Stars Gina Alajar, Alchris Galura, Nonie Buencamino, AA Fernandez

Directed by Benji Garcia

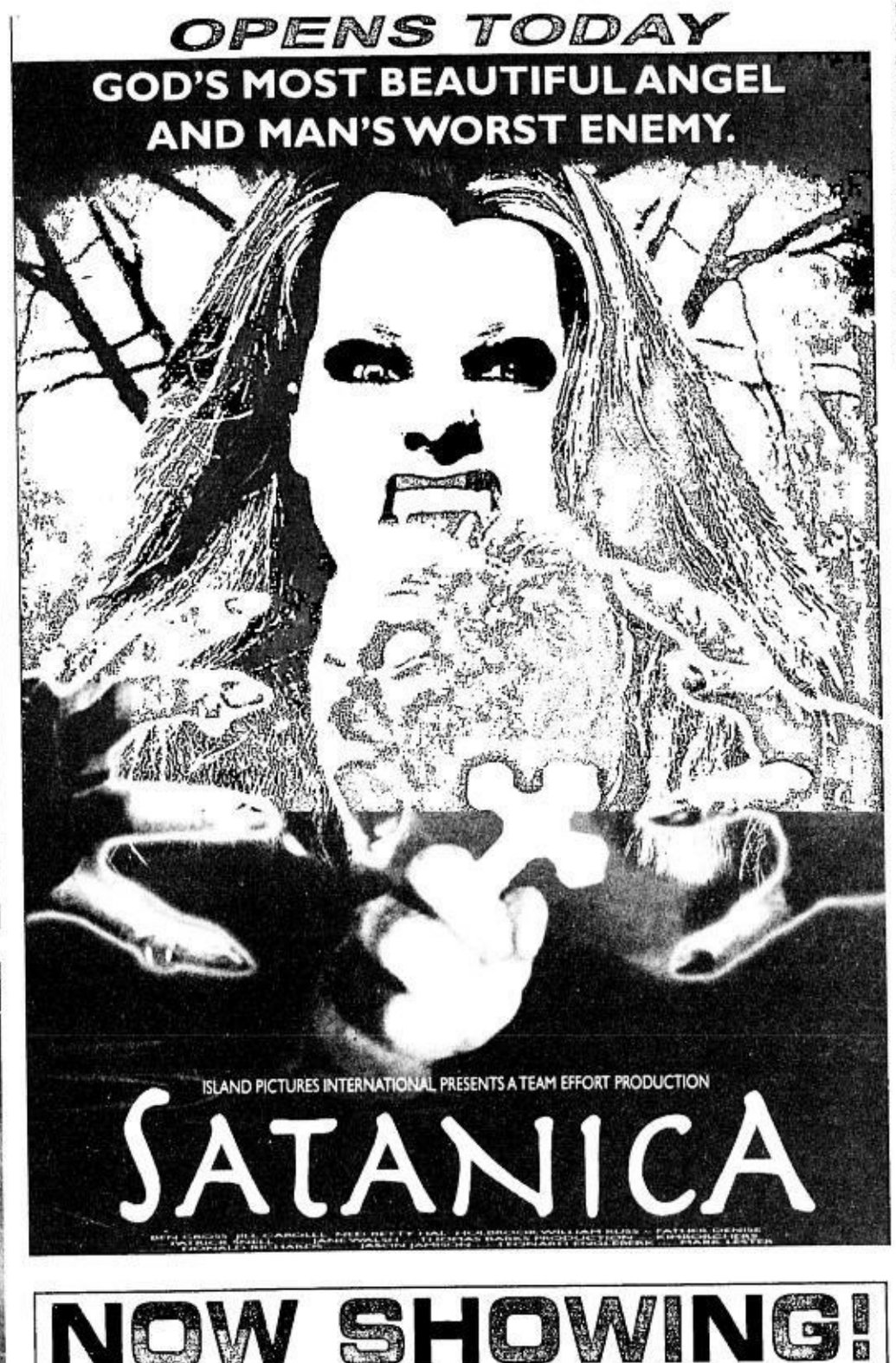
An Ifugao teenager (Galura) dreams of buying a pair of rubber shoes, just like the ones worn by the hikers and tourists he guides up and down his people's rice terraces. Galura won Best Actor in last year's Cinemalaya Film Festival for his sensitive work. Graded A by the CEB, this digital movie was also shown at the Cinequest Film Fest in San Jose, California. CEB reviewers hail it "as a simple, quiet film that is nevertheless touching and effective. Direction is competent and imaginative in its avoidance of sentimentality. The screenplay should be commended for its grasp of tribal life ... Well-written, a rare combination of straightforward storytelling and light humor." Exclusively in SM Cinemas.

Happy Hearts

Stars Rustom Padilla, Wendell Ramos, Jean Garcia, Shaina Magdayao, Rayver Cruz

Directed by Joel Lamangan

A Fil-Am kid (Cruz) returns to Manila to discover that his dad (Padilla) is gay with a male live-in partner (Ramos). Complicating matters is his blooming romance with the spoiled daughter (Magdayao) of his dad's boss. Described as a wacky romantic comedy-family drama, this movie marks the big launch of the "Shaiver" love team. Regal producer Lily Monteverde stresses that the movie is for the "young ones and the young-at-heart ... it's for everyone in the family. It's heartwarming and funny at the same time. It tells different kinds of love stories: That between parent and child, teenaged boy and girl and two adult men."

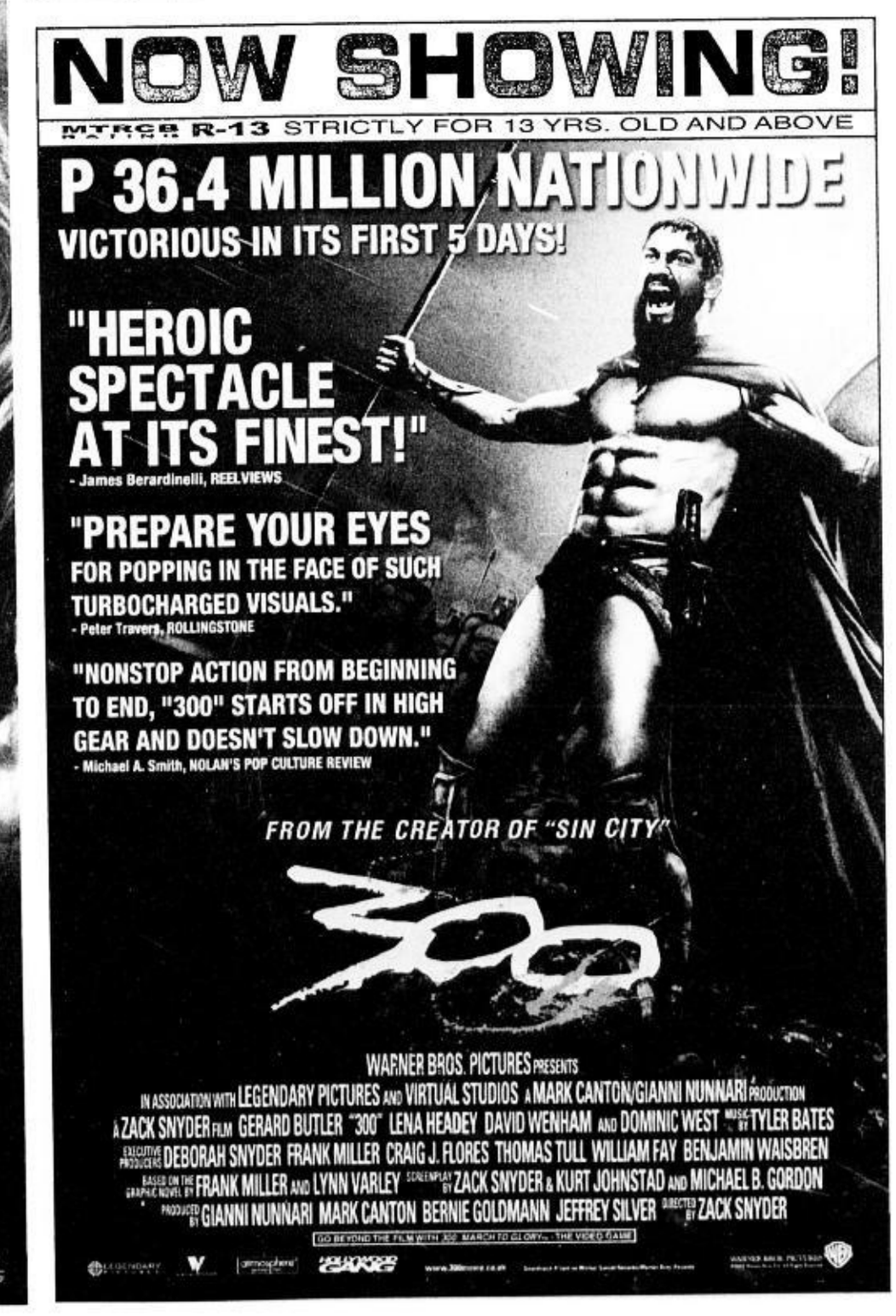


Because I Said So

Stars Diane Keaton, Mandy Moore, Piper Peabo, Tom Everett Scott, Lauren Graham

Directed by Michael Lehmann

In this "unabashed chick flick," a matchmaking single mom (Keaton) pulls out all the stops to ensure that her youngest and most insecure daughter (Moore) will end up happily married like her two older daughters (Peabo and Graham). Jan Stuart of Newsday is livid: "Speaking as a longtime Keaton fan, it's hard to watch her go through the overbearing mother phase." A.O. Scott of New York Times concurs: "[It's] an exercise in deliberate mediocrity with chuckles and heartwarming moments distributed as carefully as nuts in a factory-made brownie." Richard Schickel of Time magazine defends it: "If you don't expect too much ... you might find yourself pleasantly—all right, soothingly—surprised."



Pathfinder

Stars Karl Urban, Jay Tavare, Nicole Muñoz, Moon Bloodgood, Michelle Thrush, Wayne Charles

Directed by Marcus Nispel

Stranded in the New World, a Viking boy is raised by American Indians. When his kinsmen return to destroy the Indians, the grown Norse warrior (Urban) defies his roots and defends his adoptive tribe. Joshua Tyler of Cinemablend.com opines: "Urban aside, I can't figure out what the draw of this movie is supposed to be."

OPENING/ F5